

LUSHAI CHRYSALIS

FRONTISPIECE

“ MRS. JOINT ORGANISER ”
(See Chapter IX)

IN LUSHAI from 1931-1943 Mrs. Joint Organiser shared the Author's life and isolation, standing stedfast all through the fateful year of 1942 when from April onwards, due to the fall of Burma, Lushai Hills, her frontiers exposed to the enemy, assumed the unenviable status of guest of the Japanese initiative.

No total defence scheme involving the village population of Lushai, men and women, could have been attempted honourably if Mrs. Joint Organiser herself had not agreed to remain in the Hills, even if overrun. The implications of this decision are now well known the world over since so much has been published of the Japanese atrocity practices.



MRS. JEAN CHISHOLM MCCALL

No Total Defence scheme could have been successful if the first act of the wife of the principal organiser had been to leave the hills to avoid sharing the risks of mutilation and death accepted voluntarily by the families in the Lushai Hills.

With full knowledge of Japanese methods in 1942 and against all persuasion Mrs. McCall decided to remain on in the hills thus infusing truth and sincerity into the Total Defence scheme which was the answer of the Lushai people to the fall of Burma in April, 1942.

(See Plate XLVIII).

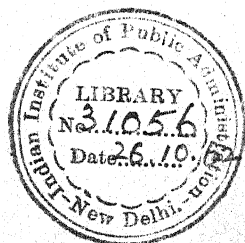
LUSHAI CHRYSALIS

By

MAJOR ANTHONY GILCHRIST McCALL, O.B.E.

INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE
LATE ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY

WITH A FOREWORD BY
SIR KEITH CANTLIE, I.C.S.



LONDON

LUZAC & CO., LIMITED
46 GREAT RUSSELL STREET, W.C.1

1949

"We've chivvied the Naga and Looshai,
We have given the Afridiman Fits."

RUDYARD KIPLING.

"Change must come but it is ours to
determine whether change of growth
or change of death."

RUSKIN.

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FOREWORD

BY SIR KEITH CANTLIE

MAJOR MCCALL was for many years in charge of the Lushai Hills. To his work he brought an ardent temperament, physical energy, a kind heart and a belief that he went as an emissary of his country to bear as best he could her great responsibilities to the hill people. This belief was a tradition of his class and not personal to himself; his desire is that this tradition of service be followed by others, now rapidly taking over political power from that class, both in Great Britain and in India. His object is to arouse the interest of the citizen who, though not himself an administrator, yet has the ultimate political power and must decide whether control and guidance is to be exercised. If so, he must see to the quality of that guidance, as exercised by his chosen administrators, in full knowledge that the problems are difficult and are likely to require sacrifice, not profit. Amongst these problems Major McCall presents Lushai, typical of many other areas.

He holds that the needs of the Lushais, arising from alien impacts on their culture, cannot be met by a policy of leaving them to their own future leaders. It is for those in charge of the administration, conscious of having disturbed the old culture and economy, to take the principal part in solving the problems due to their advent. These are not only social and cultural problems but also economic; for example, the growing population pressing on the soil shortens the number of years of abandonment, during which jungle can re-establish itself and cover the hillsides between the periods of one year or two years of cultivation. Erosion by rain on the hill slopes is causing anxiety among officials in all hill areas, but not, unfortunately, among the people.

Lushai, so far as is known, does not contain materials for modern industry, so profits from "exploitation" (to use a word which some seem to apply to any form of trading

whatever) cannot be expected. Help must therefore be at a sacrifice, spiritual and financial, the latter at any rate in the beginning, from those who control its destiny. Control at such cost will be welcomed, not resisted as domination and exploitation. Such is his idea : a not ignoble one. Officers of other hill districts have written books on customs, most valuable both for the science of anthropology and the art of administration, but the form adopted by Major McCall, though it contains abundant material for equipment of the administrator, is designed to arouse the interest of the citizen, who must be for ever remote in space from the scene of his responsibilities but not—such is his hope—for ever so remote in mind.

The book is a record of endeavour ; one example is the attempt to introduce a moral code suitable for non-Christians yet not in conflict with that brought by the missionaries and spread by them with such devotion and zeal : another is the expansion of village custom to include simple hygienic measures through and by consent of village councils. There has been not only precept but practise. His wife and himself have had the distinction of creating an industry of weaving for sale and bringing it to success through many setbacks.

This foreword is not the place for criticism based on comparative anthropology, for comment on mistakes made since taking over the hills or for suggestions for the future. Major McCall is not alone among district officers in his anxiety about the perplexing future. His reward for service done came when the people of their own choice stood firmly with him, helping by all means in their power against the Japanese enemy in Burma, then separated from them by the thinnest of troop screens and in many places by no screen at all. The men of the other hill areas were as staunch : they deserve all help in the difficult times ahead.

SIR KEITH CANTLIE.

LUSHAI CHRYSALIS

GENERAL THEME

WHILE the Lushai Hills, a backward area of India, bordering on Burma has been taken for special analysis of many of the factors that can arise in the administration of a backward people, this analysis in principle will apply in major or minor degree to most similarly placed areas.

The United States of America will be faced progressively with responsibility for such administrations, whether directly under the control of the States or not. In any case the problem is one on an international level and one which from now on must persist increasingly with the creation of any new world order, *vide* America's proposals for international Trusteeship in the matter of the Italian Colonies.

The main purpose of the book is to show the following points through the subject taken, viz., Lushai :—

- (a) What happens when a backward people are exposed, undirected, to stronger culture impacts.
- (b) The necessity for fostering development along healthy and appropriate lines in cases where the backwardness of a people is such as to preclude them from fostering their own ordered development.
- (c) The necessity for a closer link of understanding of the difficulties of such people with those in the Homelands, without which the flow of suitable officers prepared to labour, suffer, and endure must become progressively less.
- (d) The projection through appendices and photographs of proof that the treatment accorded to the Lushais resulted in their support in time of trouble.
- (e) The Book contains authoritative matter compiled by me, the author, over a period of nearly twelve years' close study under conditions of much isolation and hard living.
- (f) Anthropological terminology has been omitted by me to widen the field of readers, though the principles of anthropology have been strictly applied.

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P R E F A C E

THIS book was commenced in 1939 when, with my wife, I was travelling to, and later in, South Africa. Its completion was delayed due to my recall to India on the outbreak of war, and subsequently by Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour, an event which prevented retirement and which imposed fresh burdens upon me. Chief among these was the rallying of a whole people to offer civil resistance to any invader at a time when Indo-China, Siam, Malay, Java, Sumatra, Burma, the Andamans and many other Islands were falling to the first flush of a long planned Japanese campaign. This book, however, does not deal with this adventure, a story in itself, nor with any changes wrought by war. This book has, thus, been a child nourished in the agony of the exacting years 1939-1944. Moreover, its original form of presentation has had to be partially revised to accommodate the limitations imposed by rules and custom upon any writings by serving officers. In much of the narrative lies a tribute to the Government of Assam which, by long tradition, has been foremost in the field of constructive administration of her Hill peoples, the success of which has recently been demonstrated in the remarkable loyalty and steadfastness displayed by those people in the presence of a ruthless invader, the epic of the siege of Kohima and the tales of the Assam Regiment ringing nobly in our ears.

My work has been facilitated by service among friendly mission colleagues and a friendly people in a friendly land. I wish specially to thank Pu Buchhawna Khiangte, Assistant Superintendent Lushai Hills, my friend and advisor Pu Sainghinga Lushai, holder of His Majesty King George V Jubilee Medal, Pu Kailuaia Sailo, B.A., a great-grandson of the famous Lushai Chief Pu Suakpuilala, Pu Lianbuka Lushai, who was one of the party who served overseas in the Great War 1914-18 and afterwards, Pu Chalkhuma,

Pu Hrangdawla, Head Interpreter, the whole circle staff, the many Lushai Doctors in the Hills, and the many Lushais who never failed to collaborate with me when I was in need.

Not only for the foreword am I indebted to Sir Keith Cantlie but also for his encouragement in this venture. Sir Keith is an officer of the Indian Civil Service whose personality radiates a rich tolerance of all phases of life. I have had the great privilege sometimes of working closely with him over a period of many years of association and it was because of his sympathy with the human factor in all administration that I was so ready to seek his assistance and confidence.

There is nothing in this book to which the public at some time or another have not had full access. For the purpose of factual accuracy I have consulted Mackenzie's *North-East Frontier*, Colonel Shakespear's *Lushai Kuki Clans*, and Mr. Parry's *Monograph of Lushai Customs*, as well as many official documents. For the map of Lushai showing the necessary minimum of names I wish to thank Mr. R. C. Das, Assistant Engineer, P. W. D. Lushai Hills who produced the groundwork which enabled me to enlist the expert advice and assistance of Mr. Creed of the Survey Department. This gentleman's patience and understanding of the problem at once simplified my difficulties.

The illustrations were mostly completed before Japan attacked our territories in the East.

I have no hesitation in stating that if analytical account has had to be taken of the effect of missions working among the Lushais, the contribution made by them towards the welfare of the Lushai people as a whole is one of outstanding merit and purpose in which they, as well as our people, may justly take immense pride. The missions may well take pride in the success which accompanied the calls made to the Lushai people, when faced with invasion, indicated in Appendices A and B at the end of the book.

My personal gratitude goes specially to the Reverend Messrs. E. L. Mendus, B.A., and H. Carter, B.Sc., of the Welsh and London Baptist Missions, and to Miss K. Hughes (Holder of the Kaisar-i-Hind Medal), a friend and adviser of courage, humour, and wisdom, and to Miss

E. Chapman (Holder of the Kaisir-i-Hind Medal), whose counsel, especially on matters relating to education, was always helpful, stimulating, and sincere.

If there are criticisms concerning the local administration I must myself bear much of the responsibility as there is no man living who could not have done more than he actually did when opportunity offered. But this book also indicates the need for a closer relationship between the man in the street at home and his friends overseas.

I wish to record here my thanks and appreciation for much good advice received from Sir H. G. Dennehy, C.S.I., C.I.E., I.C.S., Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam who, despite his vast preoccupations on urgent and important affairs of Government, dealt expeditiously with problems associated with the completion of the manuscript.

To my dear Uncle and friend, Brigadier-General John Charteris, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.E., I owe my deep gratitude for much sympathetic, patient, and able assistance.

Finally to my friend Mrs. Mabel Bowman, of Torrance of Campsie, and her brave son Mr. Ian Bowman, I.C.S., are due my grateful thanks for the encouragement which brought me into contact with the publishers, Messrs. Luzac & Co., and made possible the publication of this contribution.

A. G. McCall.

United Service Club,
Pall Mall.

1945.

ORTHOGRAPHY

For the purpose of giving some guidance in the pronunciation of Lushai names and words I use extracts from Mr. J. H. Lorrain's *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*, printed at the Baptist Mission Press and published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. I have perhaps over-simplified some on behalf of the reader.

A As in father.

AW As in TALL, AWL.

E As in TELL, ELL.

I As in POLICE, MACHINE.

O As in No.

U As in Took.

B, D, F, K, L, M, N, P, S, V, Z. As in English language.

CH As in CHOP.

G Preceded by N, NG, as in SING.

H Aspirate, if preceding a vowel, otherwise cut off at end of a word, like E in French.

T Chiefly as in TOWN, and not as the sound in 'THE' or 'THIS'. Thangliana is, in English sounds, Tongue-lee-arna.

CHAPTER I

"THE LAND WE ARRIVE IN"

CONTEMPLATE a country about the size of WALES with no ordinary roads, even for bicycles, with but one small lake, rivers as yet too dangerous for boats, except in the hands of experts from a far distant land, all composed of steep and rugged hills lacerated by these same whimsical rivers and we have something like Lushai.

Lushai, land of tranquillity yet upheaval, of wisdom and dire folly, of plenty yet poverty, of spirit and materialism, hope and again despair, lethargy yet vitality, its very name alluring and provoking. Indeed no one has satisfactorily explained how the name Lushai originated though one idea is that it is a colloquialism for the term used by men of olden days to typify the people with the long heads, or perhaps the wise heads, the word *Lu* meaning a head and the affix *Sei* meaning long.

But this explanation finds little or no support locally. The origin of the portion *Lu* seems totally obscure. The predominant clan among *Lusheis* is the *Sailo* clan to which belong the rulers who are descendants of those *Lusheis* who were in power when the British Government extended its dominion over this land. Those over whom they rule are a medley of clans with some association with the *Hualngos* of the Burma Hills. The Burma Hills take the view that the *Hualngos*, who now number about 5,000 souls, are *Lusheis* who did not join in the emigration from *Falam* country into what is now *LUSHAI LAND* at the time when the *Chins* drove out the *Lushei* clans, perhaps around the year 1790 or the early nineteenth century. The *Hualngos* seem clearer on their origin. They claim that they originally sprang from the rocks at *SEIPUI*¹ in the Chin Hills of Burma and as time went on the inhabitants of *SEIPUI* became known as the sons of *SEI* which gave rise

¹ Not on map.

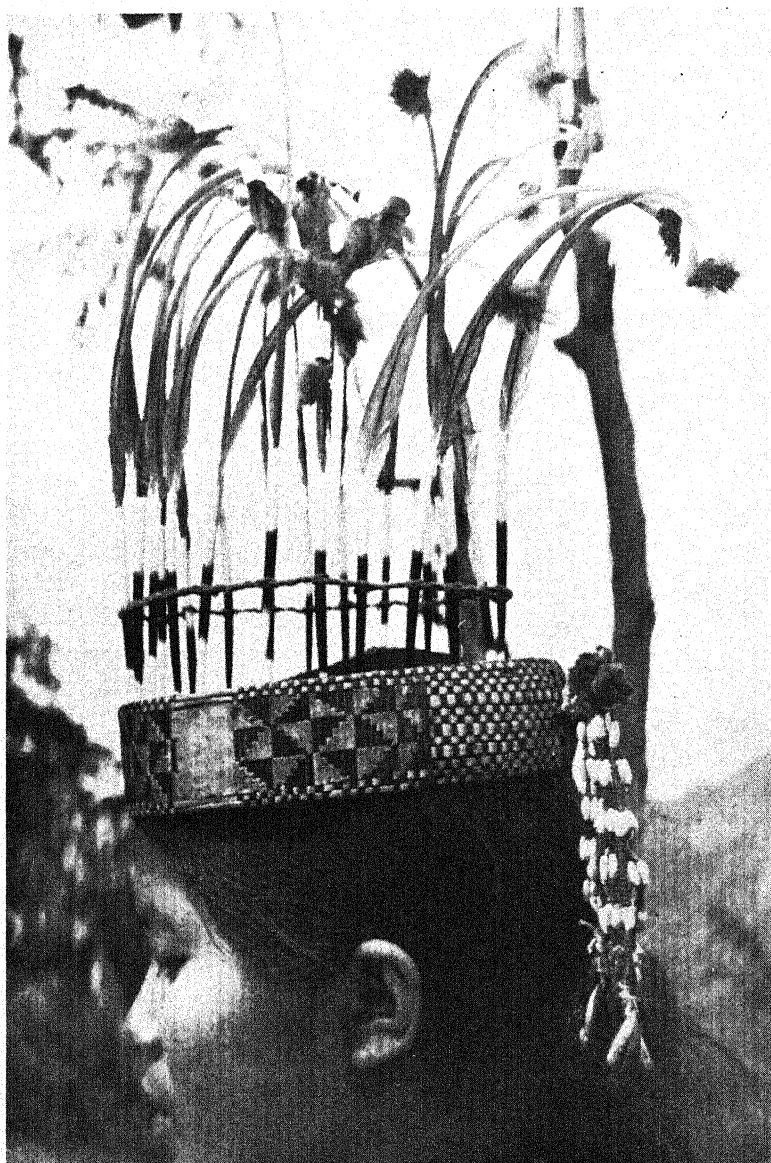
later to the name LUSHEI, since modified to LUSHAI, the modern name covering most of the inhabitants of the Lushai Hills of to-day. This theory that the Lushais had their origin in the Chin Hills is not repulsive to the people, but the internal history of the Chin Hills, so far as it has been verbally handed down, sometimes discloses the HAULNGOS in the guise of fickle go-betweens, a characteristic from which few of these kindred clans can claim immunity.

Tucked away as Lushai Land is, its life, nevertheless, has been vital, even particular. Where no sound of any motor car has ever yet been heard, the factory sirens as yet unknown, and glass windowed shops unthought of, in this wide expanse of long ranges of hills upon hills, human nature has had its full play of pathos, intrigues, jealousies, even suicides. How difficult this is to believe when first we penetrate further and further into the heart of the land, spirits rising as we gradually soar above the even lowliness of Assam's now distant plains. It would seem that a new life, a new strength, a new confidence, are all at hand as we stop a little to slow up and to look out and to see. Is it that we are responding to the invitation of this magnanimity, this purity of air, and this simplicity of nature?

In some cases the marches have seemed long. The stages from DWARBUND in Cachar to KANGLAI or the crane place (so named because the hills if small are yet high and, so, like cranes) and from KANGLAI to CHHIMLUANG and on to KOLOSIB have been enclosed, through monotonous bamboo groves, but after the last-named sixteen miles stage to KOLOSIB we feel the change. Is there not here a real post office, a place from which messages can be sent to LONDON, PARIS, and NEW YORK, even though there is nothing to afford protection from the tigers or the elephants nearby except the noises of man's titterings, his fires, his clatterings? Is there not now some growing sense of space to be derived from the grassy undulations which mark the reservation which is KOLOSIB, that hill of the old time chief KAWLA's head? Here is grass, the privileged joy of browsing cattle, in turn the pride and strength of



THE RALDAN ROCK



THE VAKIRIA

some Nepali or other foreign settler. Forty-five years ago the Lushais did not even realise that by appropriate manipulation milk could be extracted from cattle. Here then is KOLOSIB, the first northern outpost of the Lushai Hills, the douane by which travellers by land to North Lushai have to pass after authorisation by the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills at Aijal and by the medical authority at KOLOSIB.

Ahead there lies Lushai—Lushai, the little known, the land which is totally surrounded by such varying contacts as the four areas of the Province of Burma called TIDDIM, FALAM, HAKA and ARACAN, the two Indian States of TRIPURA and MANIPUR, and the three British Indian districts of SYLHET and CACHAR in ASSAM and the CHITTAGONG Hill Tracts of the Province of Bengal.

The journey southwards from KOLOSIB into the heart of Lushai Land is continued stage by stage twelve to fifteen miles each day, first to BUALPUI, the place of the great muddy pool of ancient days TAWITAW, so named because of the SPONDIAS MANGIFERA or Hog plum trees nearby, and so on to Neibawi the last stage before we reach Aijal, the Headquarters station of the District. After the first day's march not a river is crossed, the path following the higher portion of an unbroken range to Aijal, 111 miles from Silchar, in the district of Cachar wherein lies the terminus for the mail train from Calcutta to Southern Assam.

Wrinkled men are passed on the way, men slooping along erect and balanced, leaving behind them in their trail a pungent aroma of home grown tobacco, and men dressed in much worn Lushai cloths or perhaps the fashioned relics of Chicago, Blackpool, or elsewhere. A cleanly turned out chief with varying supporters may seek to halt us on our way with an invitation to accept some Lushai rice beer or fruit or tea, perhaps even an offering of eggs neatly packed in cotton in a bamboo container, or sometimes a fowl as a token of welcome in keeping with age-long traditional hospitality. Nearer the villages, their bodies bent with the strain of supporting weights upon their backs, with the help of bands of finely plaited cane around their foreheads, women will be carrying heavy loads of firewood,

or water in several pipes of round bamboos, or rice gathered from the jhums.¹ There may be traders from distant Burma padding along on their way back from the plains of Assam laden with copper vessels, one on top of the other, calculated to yield them a profit of fifteen shillings per pot, less expenses, in return for their five weeks' absence from their homes.

Some may be "moving" or about to pem, which is the Lushai word for migrating. If more well-to-do, pack animals may be used, the queenly duck, in its travelling cage of twined bamboo, poised benignly on the top of the centremost of the three loads.

Guardedly observant, usually contemplative and distant, all have a ready capacity for cheerfulness and laughter, while the children, so often scantily clothed and dirty beyond hope, only want a joke or the toss of a coin to let loose the floodgates of wild and noisy abandon.

The houses are well built and usually last for eight years or so. Entry is by an incline of roughly hewn logs made rigid and leading up to the outside porch on which is stacked the family firewood and poultry baskets. There are no structural partitions to make small rooms but the interior is a dark, long, and rectangular spacing usually badly ventilated. The floors are made of split bamboo matting while the walls, supported on roughly hewn uprights, are made of a stouter bamboo plaiting. The roof is generally of thatch where this can be obtained, bamboo matting, held down in place by wind logs, providing the alternative. Each house has an outside verandah which is used for weaving, cotton processing, drying of rice, or just passing the time of day. Cooking is done inside the house on an open hearth the smoke from which, not infrequently, causes acute eye discomfort and, in more serious cases, premature blindness.

The further northwards we continue on our journey into Lushai the more open and grand the scenery becomes. To East and West of the DWARBUND-AIJAL main bridle track lie waves upon waves of hills, at first betraying deep ravined valleys but later only vying with each other for notice and pre-eminence.

¹ Jhum—Hill side cultivation.

There out to the west beyond the towering and majestic REIEK HILL, north of PHAILENG lies the MAWNG LANG hill on which, according to talk among the young bucks, climbing ladies cannot avoid exposing their nether parts so steep are its sides ! More to the east lies the RALDAN¹ Rock where one brave warrior held many at bay from its commanding pinnacle. The RALDAN, or the place where the battle was held, lies near CHHUHLAWH, the village of the vulgar name, more conveniently translated as the "wages of sin", which is associated with a legend of some local colour. Once upon a time a Lushai woman found herself at the foot of her steep path homewards with a load so heavy she had not the heart to face the hill. So great was her plight that she let it be known that any man who would carry her massive load up to her village on the high hill could demand of her submission to his desires. Several men came forward, for she did not lack attraction. Fixing the plaited cane strands round his head and shoulders the chosen gallant set out with his heavy load. Up and up he went determined to be successful in his task and determined to claim his reward. But nature took a turn and by the time the unfortunate gallant had reached the woman's house on the hill top he realised the ropes had cut deep into his shoulders and, far from being able to claim his promised reward, he fell down exhausted and frustrated.

From bamboo groves, so oppressive up to KOLOSIB, the country changes gradually into perennial vegetation and friendly trees that afford shade and shelter to the dusty hiker. Orchids of enchanting variation peep from high out of their chosen security among the shady branches of tall trees, while here and there the rich red flowers of the Simul, or Indian cotton tree, provide a welcome tone of contrast and brightness among the expanses of green foliage.

Nights on the march are spent in staging bungalows which can challenge comparison with most in India. Not large, but spotlessly clean, set in kindly gardens, they offer a homeliness all their own. Except for lamps, all essentials are provided including crockery and furniture. Quick and efficient service is provided by permanent chawkidars

¹ Not shown in map.

assisted by Lushai water and fuel carriers. Except for milk and vegetables, which the Chawkidars provide, provisions, when available at all, are limited locally to fresh eggs, rice, or fowls.

So, day by day, mile after mile goes by through seemingly endless jungle until on the seventh day of marching the scene begins to change with the approaches to Aijal, which is about 3,700 feet high. Glimpses and visions of stone and permanent buildings begin to meet the eye instead of the ordinary Lushai houses. At first, five miles from Aijal itself, we come upon the settlement of DURLANG. Here is the Welsh Mission hospital principally for Lushai women, magnificently equipped, though embarrassed for the lack of water like so much else in Lushai land. Nevertheless, the spirit of sympathy, service, and understanding, which is characteristic of this whole hospital is cherished throughout the length and breadth of the hills of North Lushai. Here it is that a lady doctor carries on her responsible work day by day aided by a capable and hardworking sister.¹ These two ladies bear a severe burden. There is none else but their Lushai nurses to help them in their isolated and non-stop venture in running this hospital, which is maintained chiefly for maternity purposes. The 50 beds are usually filled, though fees have to be paid and quite rightly too, while there are sometimes as many as 50 out-patients to be seen as well. The type of patient also does not permit of speedy disposal, added to which is the difficulty that must occasionally arise over language. The reader may doubt their ability to face up to such a task. When devotion to service forms the dynamic behind unflustered competency achievement can be almost boundless.

Some five miles further on, the outskirts of the station of Aijal are reached as the bridle path broadens out more into a road following the neat shooting range with its successive hillocks marking the firing points and then we pass the School for the children of the Bengali residents—then the Welsh Mission Bazar church, monument to the bold vision and tenacity of the Reverend E. L. Mendus, B.A. Thence we go through the main bazar, through the

¹ Doctor G. Roberts, M.B., Ch.B. Miss Gwladys Evans.

lines of the Assam Rifles Battalion till we reach the demure, neat, and unsophisticated gardens and bungalows which complete the main station. To come upon such a galaxy of attraction so suddenly after days of untutored nature creates an impression which can never fade. There is something of an infectious comradeship and a sense of shelter that is so often experienced in such lovely retreats as the SAN ANTONIO gardens of MALTA, or the gardens near the Governor-General's residence in Capetown.

Here is an introduction to, or the hint of, the motley which is so often Lushai. Young bloods with superlatively Oxford bags, in contrast to the more moderate Government or Mission employees, individually-minded folk with bright blue double breaster jackets, light coloured trousers, and irresistible green, maroon, or bright red woolly berets. The old-time villagers, sometimes half naked, visibly scorned by the sophisticated townee, padding along softly hawking articles for sale, the soles of his poor feet hardened by years of siliceous irritation. Less well-to-do town girls perhaps returning from the bi-weekly bazar, their firm round breasts wobbling with devastating allurements below some little pink cotton slip or blouse, not subject to the discipline of bodice or brassiers, but serving as an indication of their importance in the love play of these people, where their faulty caressing may cost a lubber no less than a ten rupee or fifteen shillings fine. Perhaps a young Lushai belle of the more monied classes may pass by, modest, supple, and with a grace all her own, her fair skin spotless and clear, her dress distinctive in the beauty of her Lushai PUAN and her blouse of soft and attractive material, though this is probably of non-Lushai origin. However, under provincial influences little modesty fronts are sometimes inserted demurely suggesting the beauty of virginal or, perhaps, unvirginal breasts. !!

Ethnologically the people belong to the TIBETO BURMESE group with complexions less fair than those of the Chinese. They share physiological affinities with the indigenous hill people of FORMOSA and in some respects with some of the inhabitants of KOREA, and of the SHAN STATES. Definitely Mongoloid their legs are specially developed, hair coarse

and black, and baldness is little known. One Lushai once described one of his fellows in the following unflattering terms, possibly due to some emotional reaction at the time. "The man is short—has small eyes—protruding ears—black complexion—shaved chin and moustache with hair all over his chest". Most of the points made are those which a Lushai social climber would most dread.

The majority of the people in the North Lushai Hills are Lushais, traditional subjects of the ruling clan of Sailo chiefs while further south are more varied clans, akin to the inhabitants of the Chin Hills, and these include PAWIS, LAKHERS, and FANAIS, the latter being famed in olden times for their ambassadorial genius.

There is little in the Lushai background to disclose the sense of any great chivalry towards woman. Without any ambiguity Lushai has been, and still is, a country for men before it is one for women, or even children. But where better placed Lushais spare their women the bondage common to the majority, the women retain their charm and grace well into the late years. But the attitude of old Lushai is betrayed by an old saying on a par with our own sentiment of old—"A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree, the more you beat them the better they be". Old Lushai says :—

"Crab's meat is not counted as meat as women's word is not counted as word, bad wife and bad fence can be changed. But unthreatened wife and unthreatened grass of the fields are both unbearable."

The dress of the people, if not specially spectacular, is pleasing and efficient and is a cultural contrast to the splendiferous war dresses of the Nagas and kindred clans. In former days when the Lushais went into battle, or on a head hunting expedition, they cut finery to a minimum and relied more on guile and skill in ambush than on colourful and impressive trappings. There may be some relation between this fact and the fact that the Nagas have been known to employ members of the Kuki clans, racially affiliated to the Lushais, who are themselves victors of the latter in battle, as guards during wars of attrition with their

enemies. Modern Lushai men's workaday dress is, however, never very free from the exotic influence of the textile mills of Japan or elsewhere or from the enterprise of second-hand clothes dealers.

Women's workaday dress consists of a cotton KAWR or chemise and the HMARAM-PUANFEN, the Lushai name for the cotton petticoat which is coloured by various designs. Among these designs the most popular are the KAWKPUIZIK ZIAL¹ and the LENBUANG THUAM.² The petticoat is kept up by a cord or girdle known as KAWNGCHILE, sometimes being fashioned in spiral brass in the case of the more well-to-do women. The CHUMCHI type of girdle is composed of four lines of plaited brass strips. The KAWR is worn with sleeves and is open down the front, the little straight edged collar sometimes being linked at the neck. There is another type of KAWR called the DAULREM, named after a little chirping insect as the black cloth half sleeves and white waist band of the coat present some resemblance to it. Over the HMARAM PUANFEN and the KAWR a plain white or striped cloth is worn, thrown over the right shoulder the other end passing under the left armpit. On festive days more colourful clothes are worn, the KAWR being bright with reds and greens while the body cloth is larger and striped in rich reds or other colours with closely woven, colourful, border designs. Unhappily the head-dress of old, known as the VAKIRIA, composed chiefly of brilliant parrots' feathers and porcupine quills inserted into a bamboo slotted ring and worn snugly over the head above the temples, is, if not unprocurable, certainly very rare. Seeds of PING PIH, a sort of indigenous white pulse seed, intermingled with black shiny beads, also added an attractive and contrasting dash of colour to it.

Jewellery played an important part in the finished picture of any well-to-do Lushai girl, but there were no diamond rings or sparkling sapphires. A pair of circular ivory ear-rings, one and a half inches in diameter and three-quarters of an inch thick, made out of an elephant tusk, would be worn hanging in the lobes of the ears which would

¹ Curled up fronds of the tree fern.

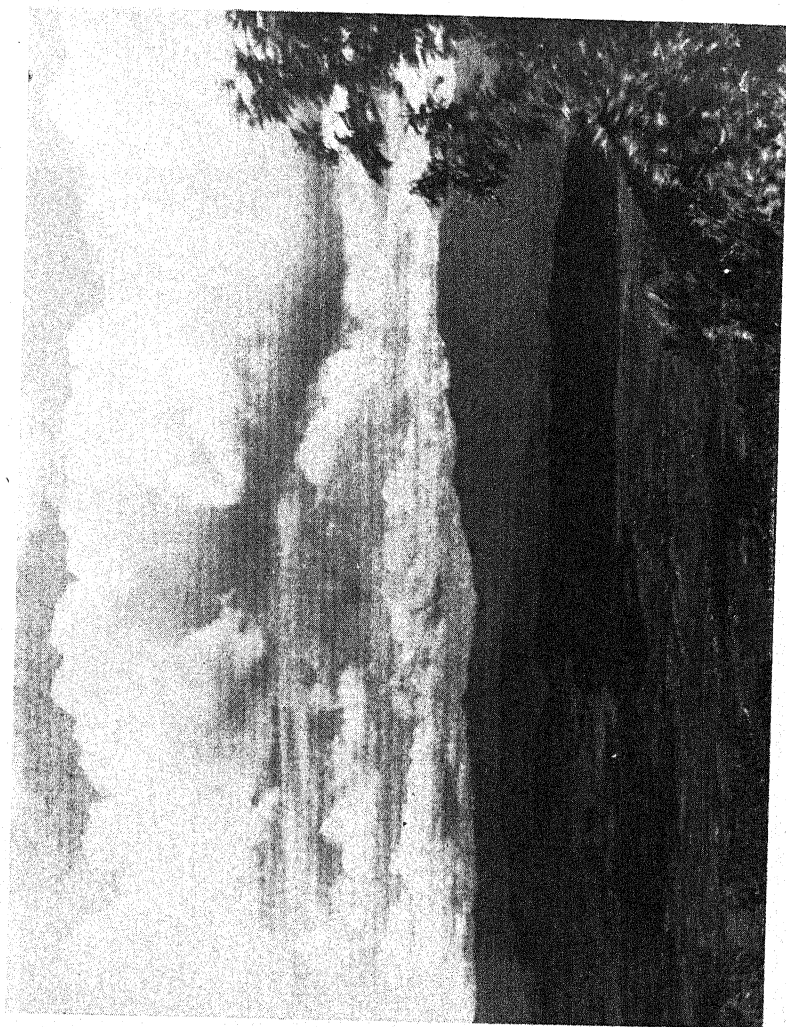
² Cluster of leaves design.

have been constantly stretched from childhood all through the growing years. The wearing of these ear-rings is fast dying out. The ensemble is completed by a necklace or necklaces of large, elongated, beads of clear round amber which are almost universally prized and worn to this day.

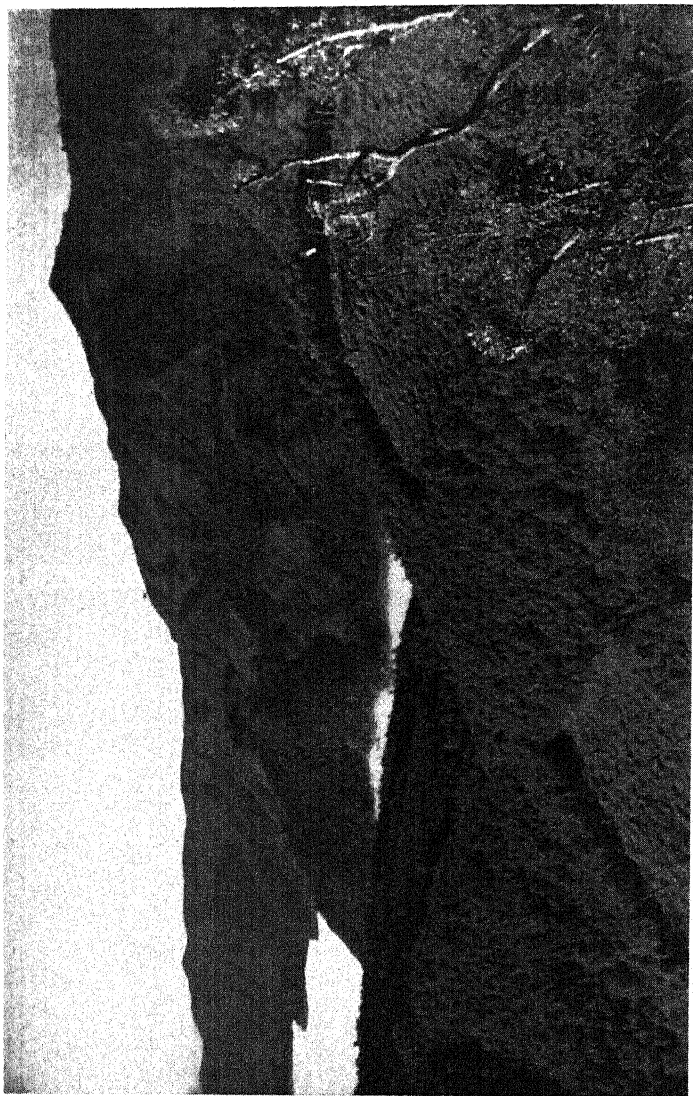
Women, especially the unmarried ones, have always been particular about their hair and the most popular method of achieving the best possible 'set' has been to apply pig's fat and to fix the hair by small combs, with a knot on the nape of the neck, after it had been all brushed firmly backwards from the forehead. Appearances are primarily effective from afar. But like her western counterpart the Lushai Belle is not unmindful of the lure of scent. Though the products of the factories of France may be beyond the means of most she seeks not to be outdone. Overnight she will lovingly place in some pig's fat the scented flowers of the *Michelia Champaca* and by the morn she will have secured her fragrant brilliantine for many a day to come. The combs are ingeniously made out of bamboo, so minutely split, tied by thread and then fixed by bees-wax, as only clever people could do.

Men's clothes have never been spectacular, ordinarily consisting of a plain white cloth seven feet by five worn round the waist with or without a longish coat open down the front. The performance of sacrifices of old is growing ever more rare and the cloth which marked the man of property and prestige is fast falling into disuse. But the traditional head-dress of chiefs is still worn on special occasions and consists of a number of the long tail feathers of the BHIMRAJ¹ bound together and inserted in the turban of chiefs' pattern. But under more modern conditions, where these prevail, clothes have taken on a fresh significance. The potentialities of a noble inheritance have given way to the calamity of second hand monstrosities. Dietitians deplore the disregard of Vitamin D, gift in measure of the Sun. Anthropologists bemoan the seeds of cultural extinction. The Hill man finds warmth and a sense of well being in his sartorial ventures and the bogey of his inferiority is superficially discounted. Shorts, moreover,

¹ Indian BHIMRAJ = Lushai VAKUL = BRONGO BIRD.



Sun and cloud over the rice fields of CHAMPBAI with the Hills of Burma calling in the distance.



JHUM CULTIVATION—THE FORERUNNER OF SOIL EROSION

Forests are bared—burned—and then planted broadcast, or by dibbling—cultivation being on a rotational basis. This picture appears in a small pamphlet by the author called *The Forests our Friends*, written for students of the Middle Standard and upwards.

do not fall down ignominiously at football. The wife is spared much weaving for the families, now more in number than in the old days of higher infant mortality. The Lushai can visit India's large cities and not attract the excitement that an elephant might cause. He feels himself no longer a savage. In truth the significance of clothes is psychological. The problem of their misuse can only be tackled by an educative and sympathetic approach.

The people are traditionally nomadic and mentally volatile, characteristics which militate against easy reconciliation to the static conditions of living under the *Pax Britannica*. At the same time they retain a cultural respect and some pride in their ancestors, social relations still being, in a measure, maintained on a well known and firm basis of age-long custom and practice. It is upon a people of this nature that the virile impact of Christianity, as mainly interpreted by two missionary bodies and the Salvation Army, has fallen. The effects, good or evil, upon the people present one of the main factors which must influence the present day administrative approach.

A people may achieve material greatness at the cost of their individuality, if their native soil provides adequate riches to attract enterprise, or, on the other hand, the world may pass them by. Lushais are a people who have been passed by these many years. Lushai longs to enter the arena of contest. Contests are ruthless and alluring but forbidding, and this debutante contents herself with contemplating all that is exotic and colourful in the big big world beyond her insular boundaries. A tough people, the Lushais hammer out a pattern with elementary tools, dreading eccentricity, spectators rather than contributors, musers more than creators and as imitators ingeniously stimulating. As a people they are actuated by instinct rather than by any objective analysis of problems. The past is a dim past, a past that has no record except that inscribed upon the hearts of the people by the accumulation of experience after experience related from father to son down through the ages.

The people live in isolated groups of settlements of from 20 to 100 or 150 houses, perhaps even more, usually

situated among the hill tops and often fifteen miles apart. Government maintains 1,000 miles of arterial bridle paths from which rough, and often steep, tracks lead off to the villages and the interior country. Within this whole tract of 8,000 square miles of precipitous hills there lies but one real plateau and that is at Champhai where wet rice is now extensively cultivated by the help of running waters, tracing through the four square miles of orderly holdings, themselves a proud witness to the advantages of a peaceful and enterprising administration. Where there is any regularity in the lie of the ranges these run from north to south, divided, not infrequently, by deep narrow gorges harbouring truculent and challenging rivers. The visitor from Aijal to Champhai must fall and climb at least two thousand feet in five out of the eight stages of the journey to Champhai, itself situated 5,000 feet above mean sea level.

Up to a height of about 2,000 feet bamboo jungles predominate, gradually giving way to tree jungles, these being protected by thickly knotted undergrowth with much thorn, cane, and aggeratum. Scintillating and alluring as a bride among her friends the *BAUHINIA* stands out in the deep valleys, with its delicate pinky white and almost translucent fragrance. Sharing in the beauteous grandeur all around are hundreds of busy little honeysuckers seeking to enjoy the honey from the blossoms. Carpeting this splendour little dainty wild flowers colour the foreground of almost impenetrable undergrowth. There are gentians, balsams, and stag moss, while pampas like grasses sway softly and gracefully in the gentle mountain breezes.

Although man's ceaseless war on animal and bird life has already had an effect, which is only too well marked, tiger, wild boar, bear, leopard, wild dog, most hateful of all vermin, wild cat, barking deer, and the occasional sambhur or elephant still remain, each and all seeking existence in changing conditions each in his own way. For instance, the tiger in the rains, secured by undergrowth, creeps higher up nearer to the villages in the search for easy prey among the domestic cattle.

The proverbial silence of the hills is often broken by

the excitable clatterings of monkeys of various kinds and a silent approach through the bamboo groves is often repaid by the vision of an undignified retreat by a number of monkeys as they make their getaway, jumping from one clump of bamboos to another, amid ceaseless gesticulation. The little wise hooluk, nervous, but the most human of pets, is not absent nor failing in his vociferous outbursts at all intrusion. If we travel in the rains between June and October our lives will be made a bane by the persistence of blood-sucking leeches. These appear sometimes from almost nowhere and from any direction. Some even fall from overhanging jungles and by some extraordinary means sometimes penetrate to the very depths of a marcher's clothes causing profuse bleeding before they can be detected. If care is not taken serious sores can result from leech bites. One of the most convenient methods for getting rid of a leech, with the least risk of poison resulting, is to hold a lighted cigarette to its tail. It will quickly extricate itself when it can be flicked off. To pull off a leech is unsound because it can in this way leave matter which may become poisonous and septic. If salt is poured on the leech the result is also instantaneous, but a cigarette is usually more at hand.

Climatically conditions are tropical and country only about 50 miles south of Aijal lies directly on the tropic of Cancer. Rainfall varies from 70 to 170 inches a year and the fall is subject to monsoon conditions which are the paramount influence between May and October—a period during which humidity is high, though the temperature seldom rises to 100 and then only in the premonsoon months of March, April and early May.

The method of agriculture is wasteful and extravagant but until others can create a system which can produce equally reliable results it is wiser for critics to exercise caution. The Lushai cuts down perhaps five acres of tree or bamboo jungle and, when this has become thoroughly dry in the months of March or April, he burns the wreckage to fertilise the land. Rice is sown in May, broadcast or dibbled on the burned hill side, preferably during soft falling rain, and after two or three weedings during the

monsoon the crop is reaped in December after running the constant risks of damage by drought, insects, wind storms, excessive and uncontrollable weeds—risks further enhanced near harvest time by the depredations of wild pig, rats, birds, deer, and other enemies of men's labours, who all take their toll by night, if not by day. No man who wins his existence from a hard forest by this indigenous method of agriculture can be called a lazy man. The system has, so far, though involving much labour, stood the test of ages, so that the Lushai cannot fairly be blamed if he does not show apparent enterprise in experiments in new forms of cultivation offered to him from time to time.

If the traveller happens to be passing through the rice fields around the harvest time he will be attracted by the graceful crimson coloured AMARANTHUS or ZAMZO, as it is known to Lushai, the kind protector from the evil spirit Tlingtlalanga. For it was Tlingtlalanga who brought evil. His movements were recognised by a sound like the tinkling of bells. If he was eating, the sound was quite unmistakable, a sound like HMIRR HMARR HMIRR HMARR. One sad day when he was in human form answering a call from a family to tend to the father who had fallen ill, while they were in their camp house in the midst of their cultivation, he actually commenced to eat the sick man's toes, eating and eating till not a hair of the father's head was left. In terror the mother seized her children and fled to the fields, hiding behind the ZAMZO plants. When Tlingtlalanga eventually came to search them out for more food, though he was already fully gorged, he failed to find the family. It seems clear that, though Tlingtlalanga peered here and there relentlessly and with avidity, so brilliant and grand were the crimson ZAMZO plants, behind which the family was hiding, that he quite failed to find them and in disappointment he eventually went away. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Lushais like to plant this bright and lovely flower near and around the little camp houses amid their fields of rice.

The only subsidiary crop of any great cash value is cotton which is grown among bamboo areas and near navigable rivers and often exported on rafts down these rivers, while

sweet potatoes, chillies, sesamun, mustard, and a few vegetables form additional food crops. Tobacco for home consumption is widely grown.

The economic condition of the people is very poor and is based on agricultural resources only, the right to exploit forests commercially vesting in Government's discretion. What prosperity there is is more artificial than real in that it relies on the continued receipts of cash from Government departments and personnel, aided by grants from the Missions for work in the hills, grants which owe their origin to charitably minded supporters, chiefly in the Home country.

The only tax the agriculturist can meet is a house levy of but two rupees or three shillings a year and for this small payment the householder acquires the right from Government for his family to use the forests and the land for his personal needs, and he also obtains the free use of all Government roads and can pursue litigation at no cost to the parties so far as the Government Courts are concerned. The difference of conditions which marks the salaried man and the man of the field is arresting and we perceive here the hint of a problem of artificial origin which looms ominously in local political affairs. We see a class which, with incommensurate effort, has become artificially rich. Money has fallen into hands before need for this money existed. This has given rise to exotic wants with no wide raising of the people's standard of living. But these problems are discussed in later chapters.

For the present we have glimpsed enough, perhaps to wish to see more. We have glimpsed the product of but forty-five years contact with the PAX BRITANNICA and all that this implies. What lies behind this oriental façade, attractive and alluring as we see it? There must be some history, some system of social custom, perhaps a relationship with the supernatural, folk-lore, and many other matters from which we may get a closer insight into the forces of which we must take count if we are to understand Lushai land, land of beauty, song, and contrast. Without such an insight our approach must end in misunderstanding, our sympathy remain misguided, our contribution misconceived.

CHAPTER II

AN OUTLINE OF KNOWN HISTORY IN LUSHAI

"Geographie and Chronologie are the Sunne and the Moone,
the right eye and the left eye of all history."¹

Richard Hakluyt.

¹ Oxford History of India, 1923.

IN so far as history may be said to constitute an accurate and systematic record of events any authoritative and detailed history of early Lushai at this late stage can no longer be attempted. Contacts with Lushai up to the beginning of the nineteenth century were few and vague and by no means free until the very end of the century. When contacts did become free, principally a verbal, and not a written, source prevailed. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, written records became more plentiful within neighbouring and more enlightened territories. But such records refer more to the results of impressions of matters Lushai formed by others rather than to any particular course of development within Lushai itself as perceived by Lushai eyes.

Much of what is known and can be inferred is recorded in this chapter at the risk of some fatigue to the reader because a knowledge of the actions of a people in their past is essential to derive a full understanding of the minds of the people with whom we are concerned. A people as a rule cannot change at heart over a mere century and, despite the apparent sophistication of a small section, there is no strong reason to believe that Lushai Land proves any exception in this respect.

The Lushais appear to have had a common origin with many other clans of the TIBETO-BURMAN group but to-day differences in culture and language are so marked as to suggest that many of these clans must have preserved their independence sufficiently long for them to be able to develop very definite patterns. Moreover, it is almost sure that the Lushais were deeply influenced by varied contacts with

predominantly stronger civilisations through the earlier ages for, even in such a desert of culture superficialities, indigenous society produced some of those traits of nobility, bravery, and hospitality which are common to the most cultured perceptions of human relationship. In view of the tremendous enthusiasm which the Lushais later evinced for the religion of their choice it remains a matter of considerable curiosity that they never fell to the teachings of Buddha, Confucius, or other great preceptor, with whose disciples they must have been in intermittent contact all through the ages.

Anthropological and ethnographical research might promote the deduction of some of the major probabilities concerning these earlier contacts but the day to day chronology of local events, which combined to create the inhabitants of Lushai as we first knew them, must remain lost for all time.

In the year 1760 Meer Kasim ceded Chittagong to Lord Clive of the East India Company and trade was opened up with the adjacent and intensely jungly hill tracts to the west of the South Lushai Hills inhabited by such men as the Chakmahs, Maghs, Tripuras, MROS, KHYENGs, KUMIS, and others. Whether any political motive was then specially envisaged by the opening of these trade relations it is difficult to know but, in the light of the general trend of events, the venture proved sagacious and profitable, helping to provide an effective hostage against the aggression which was in later days to be so persistent.

Coincident with these developments on the Chittagong Lushai border areas extensive internal changes were occurring in Lushai itself which greatly influenced the course of Lushai-British relations. In about the year 1780 the strong Sailo migration commenced moving from the south in a northerly direction driving before them the HRANG KHOL, BIATE, THADO, and other kindred tribes¹ of the Lushai Hills until the Sailos, with their LUSHEI clans, in 1810, chiefly under Lallula Sailo, had consolidated their internal position by occupying most of the country between

¹ These have come to be called the 'KUKI' tribes, probably of one stock with Chins and Lushais.

Champhai and Demagri northwards up to the borders of Cachar and Sylhet. This migration was probably caused by the Zahaos and Burma clans such as the HUALNGOS, TLANG TLANGS of FALAM, FANAIS, and others becoming so strong that the Lusheis, under their Sailo overlords, were compelled to give way and establish themselves in the area known now as the North Lushai Hills.

The Sailos claim to be descended from SAILOVA one of the seven sons of the founder of all LUSHEI, namely, THANGUR, and in order for the Sailos to gain unchallenged paramountcy in the North Lushai Hills they ultimately had to vanquish in battle their remaining kinsmen who included the THANGLUAH clan, the RIVUNGS, the PALIANS, and the ZADENGs, all of whom were still holding together in separate camps but in some strength.

Before proceeding to retail the course of these subsequent struggles it is interesting to record one story concerning the origin of the Sailo supremacy though there are others not differing very substantially. The real founder of the LUSHEI clan, it is claimed, was ZAHMUAKA in circumstances which are rather droll. The people of old, known as HNAMTE or common people, lived separately in clans but no co-ordinating leader was forthcoming because in those ancient days all feared that any new chief would be plundered by the PAWIS or CHINS of the Burma Hills. But the HNAMTE always hoped for a chief and called on one ZAHMUAKA but his first reactions were unfavourable, he having dreamed that the stream of water from his penis fell as a fountain spray over the many hills around—an omen he did not consider propitious. But he was persuaded by the HNAMTES that such a vision suggested rather the co-ordination of all those living within the many hills. On this interpretation Zahmuaka was moved to accept the chieftainship, undertaking never to place any member of the HNAMTE in his house, as a slave. Zahmuaka's rule prospered and a great-grandson, SAILOVA, was born to have a son in time named CHHUNGUNGA, who ruled over 7,000 houses at a place called SELESIH.¹ It was CHHUNGUNGA's ability which paved the way for the Sailos' greatness.

¹ Not on map.

Reverting to the Sailos' defeat of their kinsmen we trace an instability which is engrained. The Palians were defeated in circumstances which may well have been only too characteristic at that time. The Zadengs had enlisted the help of the Palians to defeat the HUALNGOS of Burma and were successful. Success went to the heads of the Zadengs. They conceived a plot to bring ruin to their late allies. They allied themselves with a certain truculent Sailo chief named HAOPUITUALA, supported by the Chakmahs of the Chittagong Hills, and falling upon the Palians they defeated them at the PUKZING HILL in 1830 in a battle from which the Palians failed to recover. The Zadengs were, however, shortly to meet their own Waterloo having relied too complacently on their apparent impregnability based on a strong settlement of four villages, each numbering up to the impressive total of 1,000 houses. This Zadeng concentration of 4,000 houses was near the DARLAWNG Peak. Moreover, they made a faulty appreciation in relying on the belief that the Rajah of Manipur would surely come to their aid if they were ever attacked. When, however, MANGPURA SAILO, the virile son of the great Lallula Sailo, chief leader of the Sailo migration, did attack, no help was forthcoming from Manipur. The Zadengs were utterly routed and the last Zadeng who ruled independently died in 1857 at CHENGPUT¹ near LUNGLEH. The passing of the Zadeng rule was not regretted by the ordinary people for they were harsh rulers, cruel in war even as in peace. The Sailos now ruled supreme over the North Lushai Hills. Had they perceived the possibilities that lay in unity and consolidation history might well have taken a very different course. But internecine wars over marriages, lands, or plunder induced a lack of control and strength which later precipitated clashes with the inhabitants of neighbouring districts in British India.

From 1834 to 1841 the protection of settlers in British India from the fierce depredations of the raiding LUSHAIS² was entrusted to a Manipuri Chieftain named TRIBHOWANJIT

¹ Not on map.

² For convenience now let us adopt the modern name LUSHAI, LUSHEI still remaining as a clan name.

SINGH who, with his brother RAM SINGH, was provided with land near HAILAKANDI in Cachar as well as arms and ammunition. Due to their intrepid and resourceful leadership the arrangement produced excellent results till the brothers were put to death in Manipur on becoming implicated in one of the recurring plots to overthrow the Ruling House.

In 1842 a series of raids on inhabitants of the British India districts of Aracan in the South and Sylhet in the North compelled counter action by the British Government. In the North the Lushais had cut up some Sylhet woodcutters on the ground they had withheld from the Lushais tribute due on timber extraction. The authorities in Sylhet sent up three intermediaries to investigate the matter. The Lushais detained two of these and, after torturing him by leading him up to the gruesome relics of the decapitated remains of the murdered victims, the remaining intermediary was released to negotiate a substantial ransom which was later in fact paid to the LUSHAIS.

In the south Mr. PHAYRE, who later became Sir ARTHUR PHAYRE, was forced to seek retaliation by his expedition into the south Lushai Hills from Aracan, which had been annexed after the close of the first Burmese war. But the expedition did no more than demonstrate that any but a well and fully found expedition into this country was doomed to failure.

It is only fair to emphasize that when the LUSHAI people undertook a raiding expedition their objective was not the British as the British, but rather vengeance on deserters who were then residents in British India, or the propitiation of their animist spirits. The Lushai was not traditionally such an enthusiastic head-hunter in the sense that the inhabitants of the Naga Hills have been known to be in earlier times. Nevertheless, head-hunting was practised. In return successful young men had the pick of their village beauties for the asking. Deaths among the nobility occasioned the need for providing retainers and servants for the journey to the MI-THI-KHUA or village of the dead men. On return from such raids the young women would accompany the welcoming party and meet the warriors

carrying for them Zu, fruit, and tobacco, and would escort them back to the village amid ecstatic jubilation.

The young braves would produce the gruesome heads of their victims in combat from haversacks or bags and, after placing these on high poles in the village square, the whole community would join in frenzied dances and songs while maidens plied one and all with limitless Zu. Some would plunge a spear into the weird gaping monstrosity that so recently had been dignified humanity. Even worse might happen if the chief's son was himself but a boy and too immature to face battle combat. Some unhappy captive might be dragged helpless before all while this young man would plunge and plunge again his father's spear into the victim's sagging body, amid the encouraging cries of staunch supporters of the ruling house. Yet so sacred and privileged were the bodies of the chiefs themselves that they led their armies from the rear and not from the front !

From 1843 onwards for some years conditions were most unsettled. While a brief reference to the main events helps to provide the background of British relations with Lushai, there are lessons to be learned from failures and successes and we may see indications of the causes of much misunderstanding.

In 1843 LALRIHNA, a descendent of the powerful chief SIBUTA, whose monolith fifteen miles south of Aijal was partly re-erected in 1929 by the late Mr. N. E. Parry, Indian Civil Service, took upon himself to die. After his body had been appropriately left to dry and wither over the homely household fires his son LALSUKTLA and his cousin BAWTAIA set off on a raiding expedition to procure a number of heads to ensure for LALRIHNA a suitable bodyguard and staff of minions for his journey to the dead man's village. In point of fact this procuring of heads for this particular purpose does not seem to have been an indigenous Lushai custom but appears, rather characteristically, to have been an adaptation under the influence of the ZAHAOS and HAKA CHINS of the Burma Hills, among whom this custom was widespread. To extend the digression further another custom adapted by the Lushais under this influence was

that by which remains of victims would be buried with victorious chiefs in their graves at their death. It was in the grave of VANHNUAILIANA, "the greatest under the skies", that a human arm was later found buried with his remains.

During this escapade of LAKSUKTLA and BAWTAIA 200 Lushais on the dark night of April 16th, 1844, launched a ruthless attack on a settlement at KUCHABARI,¹ near PARTABGHAR, within Manipur territory, killing outright twenty people and taking back with them their heads and six live captives. LALSUKTLA was suspected to be implicated in this. In December of the same year Captain Blackwood led an expedition of some men of the SYLHET LIGHT INFANTRY into the Hills. Events proved unhappy.

LALSUKTLA came out to meet the Captain who, rightly or wrongly, at once seized the chief whose person by Lushai custom was so sacred. His seizure in this was taken as a dishonourable breach of courtesy and custom. LALSUKTLA's explanations, moreover, were not extravagant. He claimed his onslaught was directed against people who had supported the late Manipuri Chief TRIBHOWANJIT SINGH, and his brother RAM SINGH, who, he claimed, had treacherously injured LALRIHNA.

LALSUKTLA was subsequently sentenced to transportation for life while BAWTAIA was acquitted. It was NGURSAILOVA, spelt, it is believed, erroneously in Mackenzie's *North-East Frontier* as MURCHOILO, who was later to be so persistent in seeking to revenge the wrong which he considered, not without considerable justification, had been perpetrated on his father.

Before turning to events in the south it is worth recording the 1850 expedition organised by that able officer Colonel Lister to avenge an extensive raid on Sylhet, Tripura, and Cachar in circumstances that showed clearly how the old day THADO (Kuki) raiders had been replaced by the conquering LUSHAIS, when the latter pressed northwards under pressure from the PAWIS and SUKTES of the south. The expedition was successful in that with great resourcefulness Colonel Lister penetrated the North Lushai jungles

¹ Not on map but north of KAILASHAHAR.

and by approaching up a little used cultivation path near SENTLANG managed to launch a surprise attack on the stronghold of LALNGURA SAILO, burning it to the ground and liberating no less than 400 Kuki captives. A side light on this liberation was less happy. The Lushais were so infuriated by the loss of the 400 captives that they set about the cold blooded slaughter of no less than twenty Thado Kukis who had been disinclined to avail themselves of the opportunity to escape afforded by the Colonel's success.

The Colonel found the LUSHAIS to be a virile race, possessed of a clear cut culture pattern and capable of giving endless trouble at any time anywhere along the British India settlements bordering on Lushai, unless subjugated once and for all. It was forty years before the Colonel's advice was heeded.

The Lushais made their mark with Colonel Lister for their skill in battle, due greatly to the efficiency with which they could use a hand dao or knife to master the most obstinate of jungles. The expedition disclosed the virtual certainty of future raids due to the absence of any one paramount Lushai Chieftain with whom some permanent agreement might be negotiated with any hope that it would be sincerely applied. One of the advantages of the expedition was the psychological effect it had on the Lushais. Here was an enemy, himself a master of shock and surprise attack, outwitted at his own game. So great was the effect of this that peace from this quarter was secured for a period of sixteen years.

Colonel Lister recognised the need at this time for an appropriate intelligence service to keep up with the progress of affairs in the Lushai Hills. After some delay his plan was adopted and Kukis were recruited for the purpose. But after giving excellent results the whole scheme failed due to unintelligent handling of this intelligence corps. Attempts were made to knock these rough and ready hill men into soldiers of the spit and polish type in spite of the fact that their very genius lay in their individual acumen, ability to endure physical exertion, and wide knowledge of indigenous scout craft. The disbandment of these

scouts considerably weakened our position many years later when more serious trouble again broke out.

In the meantime we can leave North Lushai to sixteen years of reasonably peaceful relations with British India. Internal strife there was. Individual Lushai chiefs, claiming to have wide support and influence, would seek the support of the local British Officers against their own tenacious enemies to their south, the Suktes and Pawis. The time was really ripe for diplomatic moves. LALSUKTLA, still in custody, might have been released on favourable terms and the people were in no mood to oppose any move for their own protection and security, provided their actual independence was not sacrificed, though many of the Chiefs envisaged the feasibility of independence under British protection. But the heads of a government in a far distant land failed to appreciate the pictures drawn by officers on the spot. Secretariats overruled executive leadership and genius. Orders were issued involving pursuance of an appeasement policy. This involved inviting local executives to take ridiculous risks in order to save the general taxpayer from shouldering inescapable responsibilities. How could there be appeasement? Local executives were dealing with a people with a code of conduct in connection with which they had nothing to offer. To expect executives to make offers inspired by their own National conceptions of civilised dealings was to evince an entire ignorance of the local problems.

In the south events were forcing our hands. Since 1790 the lands lying between the regularly-administered district of Chittagong and the unadministered hill tracts to the north had been administered by the PHRU family, originally immigrants from Aracan in Burma. Between 1830 and 1840 conditions within their jurisdiction had deteriorated steadily. Sub-chieftains entered into intrigues with the wild interior tribes for the purpose of overthrowing their domestic rivals. The British Government found themselves in the invidious position of having to accept tribute from the PHRUs, through their subjects and their property remained without any vestige of security. So control had to be taken from the PHRU family, which was duly

compensated. Our control in this way was extended a little further towards the direction of the Lushai Hills.

In 1847 and 1848 the Lakhers, or SHENDUS as they are described in Mackenzie's *North-East Frontier*, commenced to raid these lands. An impotent and ill conceived expedition was despatched under Lieutenant Hopkinson which served once again to emphasize the futility of anything but a thoroughly adequately planned expedition. Unprecedented hardship was encountered due to lack of adequate food and water supplies, further aggravated by impenetrable jungles, insects, and, often, illness. Matters were not improved locally by this futile expedition because the LAKHERS sacked any villages which were in any way suspected of having assisted the British, and the show of interest by the expedition was not even sustained by the Government which ordered it.

In 1860 the uncertainties and insecurity of the past in the South Lushai Hills culminated in a daring and fierce raid by ROTHANGPUIA, a Thangluah Chief, one of the harassed Chieftains who would much have preferred to have been taken over by the British Government. It was this Chief who had organised this raid near the TRIPURA STATE border which resulted in the murder of 186 British subjects. In the subsequent attack on this Chief he fired his village before Captain RABON's forces could approach. The following year this same Chief showed a glimmer of that perspicacity which marked his subsequent relationship with the British Government. He entered into negotiations with the HAOLONG Sailo group of Chieftains with a view to promoting some rapprochement with the British, a move which aimed at procuring security from LAKHER raids while re-establishing his personal relations with local British Officers. But with these wise plans energetic and alarming raids by the LAKHERS sadly interfered, and, instead, ROTHANGPUIA sought and obtained protection from the British against the Lakhers by means of a garrison of forty British troops established at his village. The negotiations with the Haolongs inevitably broke down. Major Graham, who was in charge in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, was held up by VANDULA SAILO of the HAOLONG

group when he attempted to make contact with the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, Mr. Edgar, by way of a northerly route following the course of the Dhaleswari River.¹

In the meantime that remarkable pioneer of Lushai Land, Captain LEWIN, known by the LUSHAIS as THANGLIANGA meaning the GREATLY FAMOUS, had undertaken a desperately bold and unofficial march through to AKYAB from RANGAMATI in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, now its headquarters station. It was Captain LEWIN who first discovered that the most dangerous enemies of all were the LAKHERS. He pressed this point on Colonel PHAYRE and emphasised the need for Government establishing a more forward headquarters and creating a superintendency of the Aracan Hill Tracts—a proposal subsequently adopted by the Government of Bengal in 1869 when, at the same time, the headquarters of the Chittagong Hill Tracts at Chandragona² were moved further up to Rangamati.

There is an interesting book written by Colonel LEWIN which he called *A Fly on the Wheel*—a title he chose, no doubt, as being synonymous with his experiences as an isolated and pioneering officer trying to seek belief and understanding from a distant bureaucracy engaged over much in departmental contest. His monument exists to this day at Demagri overlooking the ever turbulent pool called the TLABUNG LICHENG, meaning the round pool.

IN MEMORY OF
LT. COLONEL TOM HERBERT LEWIN, B.S.C.,
ONCE SUPERINTENDENT OF THESE HILL TRACTS
BORN 1839. DIED 1916.

He came to this people in 1865 and worked among them and for them nine years, when loss of health compelled him to return to England.

The people trusted and loved him for his sympathy and sense of justice, for his untiring interest in their welfare, and for his intrepid and dauntless courage.

He travelled in their unknown land, visiting their Chiefs, their villages, and their homes, alone and unafraid.

¹ Marked by Lushai name of TLONG in the map.

² Not on map; South-West of Rangamati.

He was the first to interpret and write down their language preparing the way for schools and progress.

He studied and improved their agriculture and their laws and helped them in their difficulties.

The people knew him as THANGLIENA (Tom Lewin) and honoured him as a Chief.

They called him the "Lushais' first white friend."

They built a home for him voluntarily in token of their devotion.

Their children now have voluntarily brought stones here near where his house once stood and have helped the one who knew him best of all, and who knew how his heart was ever with the people, to build up the stones to the memory of

THANGLIENA.

To revert once again to the North, in 1864, in pursuance of the appeasement policy ordered by Government, Captain Stewart, the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, managed to establish the makings of an understanding with the important Lushai Chief SUAKPUILALA SAILO, who had only in 1861 sanctioned the merciless raid on ADUMPUR in Cachar. But by 1868 affairs in the North could hardly have been in a worse state. The Lushais attacked Nagas in the Manipur State, Suakpuilala ejected RANPHUNGA Chief from TRIPURA STATE territory, and in 1869 the LOHARBUND Tea Estate was burned out and MONIERKHAL raided.

Some explanation for the failure of Stewart's understanding with Suakpuilala may lie in the fact that the latter had, some years previously, married the sister of NGURSAILOVA SAILO, the son of captured LALSUKTLA, who was, naturally, the sworn enemy of the British, since Captain Blackwood had seized his father in 1844. It is quite possible this Ngursailova had demanded of Suakpuilala a number of heads from British India as part of the marriage price for the hand of his sister. In matters of burning love the Lushai is not easily frustrated and his ardour does not easily brook delays.

To meet this new situation an expedition was organised with commendable precision and promptitude under the direction of General Nuthall, but it was not successful. It was organised in three columns, each having a defined objective, it being hoped and anticipated that the RAJAH of Manipur would co-operate. Number 1 column was led

by the General himself by way of the DHALESWARI RIVER, Suakpuilala's village near Aijal being his objective. Unusual and torrential rain in March forced the party to withdraw. The second column under Mr. Baker was intended to serve as a decoy and it started up from KAILASHAHAR to take RANPHUNGA CHIEF's village on the way to Suakpuilala's village. This column did extremely well and only had to retire in the face of Lushai hordes, it being under-equipped for any major engagement now that the news had come through that the General himself had had to withdraw. The third column via the SONAI RIVER under Major STEPHENSON seems to have been hoodwinked soon after its start on hearing from a Chief VANHNUAILALA profuse protestations of his complete innocence and of his immediate desire to fall in with any wishes the British might have.

The Rajah of Manipur failed to make headway due to the same torrential rain which had confounded General Nuthall. Thus the whole venture was an ignominious failure, judged from the point of view of the Lushais. There was a considerable slump in our prestige, in no small measure due to Government failing to counter this failure by strong, immediate, and effective measures. This, coupled with an appeasement policy, invited disaster for all.

In Cachar was Mr. Edgar, the Deputy Commissioner, who was one of those lion-hearted officers with an unquenchable sense of loyalty and who happened to be the much needed right man in the right place to cover up, as best he could, the more glaring directional omissions. He set off at once on a hazardous mission bent on making contact with the Lushai rulers. This was made more difficult as there was no paramount interest with whom he could deal. While Mr. Edgar was actually carrying on hopeful negotiations with Suakpuilala, raiding parties, numbering about 500 men, who had come from East Lushai were advancing on the plains of British India regardless of any implications which might recoil on the residents of Northern Lushai. However, despite the unpromising position, Suakpuilala executed with Mr. Edgar the only Sanad which any Lushai Chief has ever negotiated with the British Government. This was dated January

16th, 1871, and figures in AITCHISON's *Treaties and Sanads*, Volume Two.

Edgar had to ferret his way back through these dangerous jungles now infested by hordes of raiders, originating from quite a different, and far more distant, part of Lushai. With the help of Suakpuilala's guides he fortunately got back to Cachar.

The raids perpetrated were serious and widespread. PAWIAKUKI village in TRIPURA STATE was burned to the ground. Serious raids were carried out at Alexandrapore, Anierkhal,¹ Monierhal, and Nudigram.² At Alexandrapore Dr. Winchester was shot down on his own Tea Estate, falling a victim to a surprise attack by the Lushai raiders. His daughter Mary aged five was kidnapped and taken far back into the interior of the Lushai Hills where she was kept safely for a year or two in Chief BENGKHUAI SAILO's village near SIALSUK. The body of the Doctor was recovered by Mr. Cooke by great personal bravery and he was fearlessly assisted by two KABULIS who happened to be on the Estate at the time.

The Manager of the Monierkhal Tea Estate showed great resource. Suspecting the chance of a Lushai raid he evacuated his labour force, obtained forty men from the Cachar Police under Mr. Daly, and in addition two other Europeans with thirty-seven soldiers. They all firmly resolved to stand their ground. The Lushais attacked in due course and after seventeen hours' stiff fighting withdrew, leaving fifty-seven dead and having inflicted but seven casualties upon the defenders. In recognition of his great gallantry in this action Mr. Eglinton, a local Tea Planter, was awarded a large grant of land.

These raids, however, were by no means the whole story. At JHALNACHERRA in February the Lushai raiders killed seven coolies. Eight Indian Sepoys were ambushed and all but one unhappily killed in a battle which should live as an epic for all time. These men stood their ground and killed no less than twenty-five Lushai attackers before they were all wiped out. There were other raids on Manipur State, Tripura State, and Sylhet territory.

¹ Not on map.

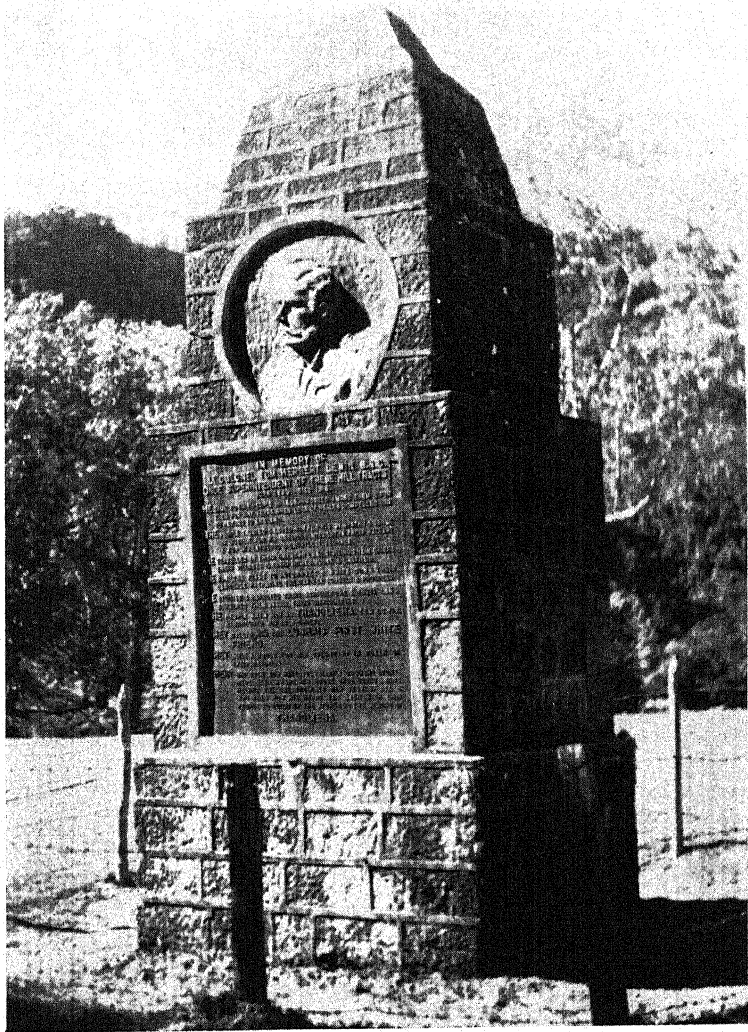
The master mind behind these persistent and recurring atrocities transpired to be the famous VANHNUAILIANA SAILO, the "greatest of all under the skies", or WUNN-WELYIN as he was known over in the Burma Hills, the premier Chief of the Champhai country about ninety miles East and South of Aijal.

These manifestations of the effect of a distant or office rule in preference to considered recommendations by local executives at last galvanised higher authorities into action, yet still retaining some affection for the general policy of appeasement which really implied a determination to resist the financial costs of occupying the Hills.

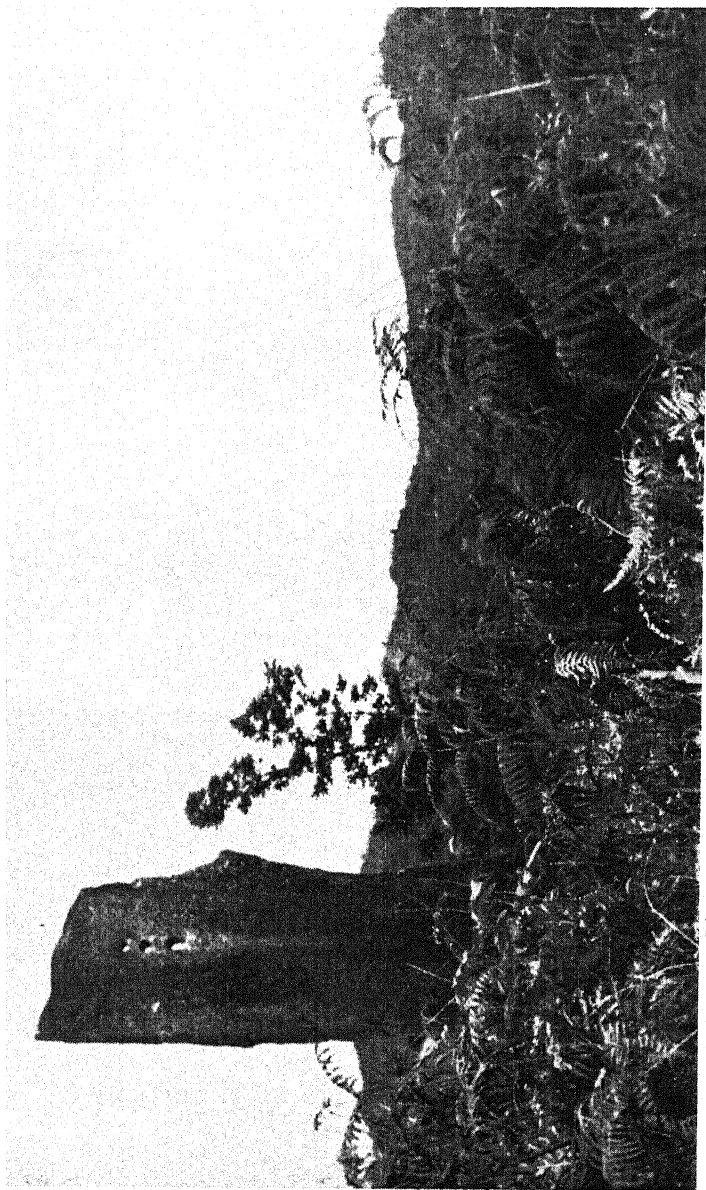
Directions were issued for operations but purely retaliatory measures were to be avoided as well as needless harm to innocent people. It was Government's wish to seek friendship, not conquest. If the infliction of punishment could not be avoided it was to take the form of destruction of villages or crops. We were out to impress Lushai Land with our desire for mutual trade and our own immense resources. A first condition prior to any negotiating was to be the rescue unconditionally of all captives in the hands of the Lushais.

It was in such spirit that the expedition of the cold weather of 1871 set out in two columns, one from Chittagong and one from Cachar, the former under the command of General Brownlow, the latter under General Bouchier. General Bouchier made his base on the BARAK River at Tipaimukh, the trijunction point between Cachar, Lushai, and Manipur State. On December 23rd the party met its first serious opposition, running into an ambush on the commanding hill of KHAWLIAN.¹ However, the General boldly attacked, stormed the village in his stride, and burned it to the ground. By the end of the year the General had accepted peace terms offered by these defeated Lushais. In early 1872 he pressed on into the country of the renowned PAWIBAWIA SAILO Chief where he received an ultimatum to the effect that if he did not withdraw he would be assailed by the whole armed resistance of the Lushais who incidentally had been reinforced by men from Champhai

¹ Not on map, not far south of Tipaimukh.



MEMORIAL TO COLONEL LEWIN
DEMAGRI
SOUTH LUSHAI HILLS



THE TOMB OF THE EASTERN CHIEF VANHNUAILIANA SAILO

"greatest under the skies," situated overlooking the Champhai rice plains. At the time of the 1871-72 expedition in which the late EARL ROBERTS acted as Brigade Major, this tomb had just been erected and Captain R. R. Woodthorpe, R.E. showed a sketch of it including a newly taken human head hanging down. It was after this Chief that the late Field Marshal called his famous charger VONOLEL, now spelt VANHNUAILIANA.

to the East commanded by LALBURA SAILO. The General ignored the ultimatum and setting his guns into action reduced all opposition, making terms of peace at CHELAM from where he conceived the idea of moving on to attack the strongholds in the Champhai Section far to the East. He was baulked of victory here because the PAWIS from Burma had taken advantage of LALBURA's men being committed to war to harass the Chief's village. So when the General did arrive he found the village empty and deserted. However, he was later able to make peace terms at CHAWNCHIN at Champhai which purported to secure free entry to Lushai by the British at will, the return of all arms captured by the Lushais at Monierkhal, and other raids, a fine of two elephant tusks, a set of war gongs, ten necklaces, and three Lushai hostages who were to return with the column. The General and his force were back in Cachar by the middle of March with all the terms fully satisfied. The whole manœuvre had been most successful.

The objective of the column operating from Chittagong under General Brownlow was to avenge the murder of Dr. Winchester and to effect recovery of the kidnapped daughter of some six years of age. The General established his headquarters at KASALONG with an advanced base at Demagri, in itself no mean feat in the face of the difficulties inherent in outwitting a river at once intractable and dangerous. By December, 1871, the village of VANHNUAIA SAILO had been taken and established as a base for still wider operations. These were successful and headquarters moved on to VANHULIANA SAILO's village. There was little opposition; the Gurkha rear-guard, constantly harassed, soon beat off most annoyances. By this time ROTHANGPUIA, the seasoned associate of LEWIN, agreed to go off to the Sailos of the HAOLONG group to negotiate for the release of Mary Winchester. In this he was successful. Legend has it that when Azim Subadar Sahib of the Police held out his arms to her she clung determinedly to her Lushai guardian's clothes till Azim, with commendable resource, offered her some sweets which proved irresistible. By the 23rd April, 1872, the force was back in Calcutta after a thoroughly satisfactory campaign. No less than 60 villages

had tendered their submission, of which 20 had been routed on offering resistance. Fifteen important chiefs had promised their lasting friendship and peace. Mary Winchester had been restored to her relations in sound health, unimpaired. Many captives from British India had been released. Three thousand square miles of country had been surveyed, half in full detail. The force suffered 47 casualties, though 118 followers had died of cholera.

The two expeditions were definitely successful in achieving what they set out to do. The conditions under which they had to operate could hardly have been more difficult. Much of the country was impenetrable jungle through which paths had to be hacked. Water was scarce and the lines of communication to bases long and often exposed. Much useful information had been acquired. The plan to secure protection for British India and the Native State of Tripura by the institution of a line of forts, continuing even to Aracan, was found to be of no practical use. It was also established that by far the gravest threat to the inhabitants of British India lay in the Lakhers and some departmental passages arose between the Governments of Bengal and Burma as to responsibility for their control and subjection. The boundary between the hills of Lushai and Tripura State was redemarcated, vague mountain ranges being substituted by accurately surveyed water courses, a boundary which, in the main, has survived to the present day.

Bazaars for the encouragement of trade were started at CHANGSIL and Tipaimukh and the Lushais were assisted in times of crop shortages, which were not at all infrequent.

As a result of these more determined and better organised expeditions peace prevailed on the frontiers of British India for at least a whole decade. ROTHANGPUIA THANGLUAH chief, who played such an important part in affairs in the Hills of South Lushai, died in 1876, and it is to be hoped his memory will be honourably preserved to mark the very important part that he took to encourage harmonious relations with the British. His grandson SANGKHUMA tells a story of his grandfather to illustrate the kind of man he was and how he could gain influence over others, a faculty

universally desired by Lushais of almost every position in society.

ROTHANGPUIA was at war with the powerful Sailo chief Savunga and they mutually decided to cease the fight by taking the oath of SAUI TAN.¹ Savunga invited ROTHANGPUIA over the river but he declined to go pointing out to Savunga he had too many men with him. He rather invited Savunga over to his side. Savunga came in company with twenty men, when ROTHANGPUIA cut the ferry rope. He then addressed Savunga saying "I have now captured you and you have become my slave. If you wish rather let us fire a gun at each other". Savunga replied he preferred to swear the SAUITAN oath to which accordingly ROTHANGPUIA agreed. When the heart and liver of the dog were ready to be eaten ROTHANGPUIA invited Savunga, as the elder man, to take the meat first. But when Savunga asked ROTHANGPUIA to eat his portion the latter replied "As you, who are the elder, have already eaten it is as though we had both eaten", and saying this ROTHANGPUIA got up and left the place where they had been seated. This greatly infuriated Savunga because he had already been double-crossed by Rothangpuia over the cutting of the ferry rope and by Rothangpuia refusing to take a bite from the liver of the dog, though he had made Savunga take an oath to which he had not bound himself.

Ability to negotiate to advantage in this way was held in great esteem by Lushai opinion.

The certificate in gold letters presented to Rothangpuia Sailo Chief by His Excellency the Viceroy was, unhappily, burned in a raid on his village by HAKA Chins from Burma.

In 1874 the Province of Assam was constituted under a Chief Commissionership and Administration accordingly took on a more virile character. Sailo Chiefs, engaged in internal dissensions from time to time, made unsuccessful overtures to the British Officers in the plains for protection. Pressure from the threats of PAWI aggression from the South gave added stimulus to these overtures. But reports of this nature were not popular with the Secretariats.

In 1878 the Changsil Bazaar on the TLAWNG,² or

¹ Oath towards peace following strife.

² Modern spelling of TLONG.

Dhaleswari river, within Suakpuilala's land was raided and though the raiders were never conclusively traced Suakpuilala Sailo Chief was influenced to meet the compensation claims of the stall owners as a contribution by him towards good neighbourliness with the British. This gesture received less recognition than it deserved at the time and undoubtedly was a bold and courageous move on the part of Suakpuilala.

The villagers were beginning to realise with some dissatisfaction that they were being made the tools of petty-minded and power-seeking chiefs. But affairs did not develop in their favour, possibly due to the pressure from the south and the east and to the deaths of influential Chiefs.

In 1879 Bengkhuaia the Chief who had held Mary Winchester as captive died. Suakpuilala showed his desire for relations of good neighbourliness with the British by punishing one of his highly placed Mantries, or Advisers, who had harassed some woodcutters on the frontier with British India to which both parties had agreed. But, unfortunately, this great Chief himself died in 1880, an incident which seriously militated against hopes for further measures of consolidation.

By 1881-1882 matters again became aggravated by internal strife in Lushai between the Chiefs, while nature rained despair upon the people by the infliction of a famine resulting from the periodical seeding of the bamboo, a calamity which recurs roughly about every thirty years. Seeding time rats, always a minor menace, multiply in shoals gorging themselves on the new food, while it lasts, only to invade the rice fields, when the former source disappears, destroying young shoots all over the hills and reducing the crop to a shadow.

Matters in the South became more acute. In 1888 a survey party under Lieutenant Stewart, working ten miles within British territory, was set upon and cut up by a party of LAKHERS. One HAUSATA Lakher was leading a raiding party and happened to pass near enough to the Survey camp for him to conceive an easy opportunity for taking some heads by attacking this luckless band. HAUSATA had

quarrelled with his wife whose father ZAHUATA refused conciliation till HAUSATA produced some non-Lushai heads, thus ensuring a satisfactory journey for ZAHUATA when the time should arrive for travelling to the dead man's village. This was the actual cause of HAUSATA attacking the party which killed several soldiers, murdering Lieutenant Stewart before the party could put up any proper resistance. This was the first of several outrages.

Thirty villagers were murdered in an assault on a small village in the Chengri Valley, while three hundred Lakhers turned back on a chance meeting with a British Police patrol. In December, 1888, Pakinna Rani was ruthlessly murdered in her own village only four miles from Demagri, twenty-one in all, being killed with her of which victims thirteen were decapitated, the raiders keeping these heads, and carrying off fifteen prisoners in addition.

These renewed onslaughts compelled the distant Government to admit that it was no longer possible to continue a policy of appeasement towards a people whose basic standards and values of approach to mutual problems differed so greatly from their own. The frontiers were strengthened pending the organisation of a further expedition into South Lushai Hills. Colonel Tregear left Chittagong in command of his force in December, 1888, to avenge this atrocity.

Just at this very time, however, LIANPHUNGA Sailo, Chief of LUNGTIAN, sixteen miles south of Aijal, raided the Chengri Valley but a day and a half's journey from Rangamati, seizing over sixty captives of whom one was selected as a victim for the play of the Chief's son, named SUAKHNUNA, who was allowed to spear him at the entrance to LUNGTIAN village after the party's victorious return. An interesting sidelight on the forces at work in the interior lies in the motive for this raid. When ROTHANGPUIA made peace with Captain LEWIN, several years previously, the former borrowed a fine elephant tusk from VUTAIA SAILO Chief promising repayment. But ROTHANGPUIA's son LALCHEUVA, feeling secure in his proximity to Demagri and his relationship with the local British officers, evaded repayment, which gave rise to this raid. Sailienpuia Sailo,

the brother of Lianphunga Sailo, having declined to be a party to the raid suffered the indignity of being, with his warriors, dubbed as "wearers of women's clothes" for their caution. But the caption ceased to have great meaning when a year later LIANPHUNGA's own warriors were openly fleeing before the troops of the 1889 expedition.

Mr. Mackenzie in his book *The North-East Frontier of Bengal* gives an account written by the Deputy Commissioner, Cachar, describing the kind of scene which might be witnessed in a Lushai village after a raid and this reads as follows :—

"The raiders carried with them forty heads of the slain as a trophy, and it is curious to note what they did with these heads on their return to the villages. They all assembled in the village of Chunglena and there the heads were arranged in a row, and an earthen vessel filled with rice, curry, and boiled eggs and a bamboo "Chunga" (Bamboo water container) containing liquor, were placed by each head, while the victors drank and danced round them. This food was given, not out of derision, but in order that the disembodied spirits might not haunt the victors, but travel in peace to the city of the dead that lies in the far south. Subsequently, a small tree was planted in front of the Raja's house, and the heads hung on its branches and the soldiery then proceeded to dance round the tree, firing blank ammunition at the heads. After this, the fighting men who had actually brought away the heads were publicly decorated, each man's hair being bound with a thick white cord, at the ends of which knots of black and red thread were fastened. These threads are highly esteemed by the Lushais, and are carefully preserved and transmitted to their descendants as proof of the prowess of their ancestors".

Retaliatory measures became essential and by March in 1889 a track had been cut through jungles which had hitherto seemed impenetrable, up and down steep hilly country, for a length of over forty miles from Demagri to LUNGLEH, now the headquarters of the South Lushai Hills subdivision. Captain John Shakespear, C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O., undertook to reconnoitre up to the Kolodyne

River with a view to finding means to attack the Lakher village of HAUSATA. He found the people engaged in cultivation and apparently not anticipating any hostilities. On receipt of Shakespear's report Colonel Tregear wired for, and obtained, permission to attack HAUSATA. On March 20th the attack was launched but HAUSATA had fired his village and fled. STEWART's gun was recovered and provided incontestable evidence of HAUSATA's complicity. Colonel TREGEAR destroyed the whole village and returned to LUNGLEH which he fortified and garrisoned with Military Police, Shakespear being appointed intelligence officer for compiling data for a more extensive operation the following year. An outpost was established at DARZO, further east of LUNGLEH, and the main track DEMAGRI LUNGLEH patrolled and wired for telegraphic communication.

The Governments of Burma and India decided at long last to take over additional territory, to take steps to penetrate as much country as possible between Burma and Assam and to ensure that British power and needs should be recognised at once and for all times. For no less than fifty years Government by the Secretariat system had resisted the pleading of Executive Officers on the spot aimed at conveying the need for such action. In this interval hundreds of innocent lives were forfeit. The following is a verbatim report by a woman prisoner who had been captured by Lushai raiders, but fortunately later redeemed :—

“Early one Tuesday morning some ten Kukis attacked our village. I was just going out from my house. They seized me and tied my hands, placing me in custody with a man who led me off to the jungle. Some time later we started to march and after two days we collected at a place where some two hundred raiders were assembled.

“About eight days and nights we marched high above the Kassalong and one night we camped by a river stream. At this camp we were met by many Kukis, males, females, and children. They plied one man with food and Zu and gave them all a loud and cheerful welcome. The next day we at length reached a village up in the hills and while

Sutenny, a Chakmah male captive, was cruelly slaughtered, we women captives were hurriedly taken off and pushed into the house of one captor. A little later we heard shouts of joy and Kuki songs, but no music, and knew it was to do with the slaughtered Chakmah.

"My captor is aged about twenty and a strong sturdy man. I have been compelled to submit to illicit intercourse with him. In his house live ten others, his parents, two sisters, eldest brother, two younger brothers, his sister-in-law and two nieces.

"I had to work very hard carrying fuel and water, also cultivating in the fields. Sometimes my captor threatened to beat me, especially when I could not understand. A few female captives committed suicide by hanging.

"The house had five apartments, and I usually slept in the centre with the parents of my captor. I came to know a child had been brutally speared, aged only seven, and that the child died crying 'Oh! Mother! Mother!'

"On one occasion I saw a dog tied to a pole. A man called a Dootheum (DAWITHIAM or sorcerer) put rice into his mouth and Zu and during half an hour he intoned prayers over the dog, uttering unintelligible words. Then with a piece of log the dog was beaten to death. The meat was eaten by my captors, but the women did not partake."

The arrangement was to despatch two columns, one based on GANGAW and one on FORT WHITE, the first post ever created and occupied by the British within the Chin Hills of Burma. In co-operation with these two columns a column was to move in from Chittagong via LUNGLEH making a road towards HAKA in the Chin Hills, while a flying column was to deal with recalcitrant elements in the South Lushai Hills country on the borders of TRIPURA STATE. The operations came to be known as the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1889-90, and were intended *inter alia* to punish those who had perpetrated the raids on Pakinna Rani's village and the people in the Chengri Valley.

In pursuance of this plan Colonel TREGEAR marched with 3,400 men leaving LUNGLEH for HAKA in December, 1889. Colonel Skinner pressed North along the DHALESWARI

River course, near the TRIPURA border, till he effected a junction near LIANPHUNGA SAILO's village with a force moving southwards from CACHAR under the direction of Mr. DALY. This was the first occasion on which through communication between Chittagong and Cachar, a depth of 250 miles of unknown country, had ever been established and the achievement gave great satisfaction at the time to the Governments interested. Colonel Skinner's transport was carried along on rafts despite obstacles in the form of dangerous and recurring rapids. It has never yet been possible to establish this as a routine line of communication. The columns under Colonel Skinner and Mr. Daly operated very successfully. The Chiefs associated with the recent raids on the CHENGRI Valley were duly punished and a stronghold was established at FORT AIJAL, now the permanent headquarters of the North Lushai Hills. Colonel Skinner and his men reached Calcutta on April 16th, 1890.

Colonel TREGEAR made contact with the Burma Column under General Symons on the 28th February at TAO village half way between LUNGLEH and HAKA. The contribution by this Burma column was one upon which it is fair to enlarge a little. The troops involved had only just returned to their base under Captain Rose after an exceedingly strenuous military operation. But on realising that there was an emergency call from Assam all ranks responded to the energetic efforts of Major-General Stewart, C.B., who, by his understanding, experience, and enthusiasm, managed to refit the troops for the new call within but forty-eight hours of their return to their base. This effective co-operation from Burma on this occasion contributed very largely to the success of the whole campaign. As a result of these operations the track between Lungleh and Haka was improved and made passable for animals. On the Burma side communications were established from the Plains up to Fort WHITE.

An interesting sidelight on the kind of intrigue and deception with which officers had to contend is provided by Mr. Daly's negotiations with the Chief Lianphunga Sailo, a courageous and bold rascal, but true to type. It may be remembered that it was this Chief who had carried

out the raid on the Chengri Valley while General TREGEAR was preparing to start his expedition into South Lushai.

Mr. Daly arrived at Lianphunga's village before Colonel Skinner did. But he had no specific orders to punish Lianphunga and was unaware that this duty had been entrusted to Colonel Skinner. Lianphunga was astute enough soon to detect this situation which he attempted to exploit by promising to hand over captives to Mr. Daly, in return for gaining a clear bill. But on seeing that Mr. Daly was, after all, likely to arrest him, he countered by claiming that the interpreter go-between had solemnly given it to him that Mr. Daly had definitely stated he would not arrest Lianphunga during any personal negotiations. Mr. Daly agreed not to pursue the matter on obtaining a promise from Lianphunga that he would give himself up to Colonel Skinner when he arrived. Mr. Daly hoped that he would have by this time instilled sufficient confidence into Lianphunga for him not to abscond. But any fruits of the negotiations were soon dissipated by Colonel Skinner arriving a day earlier than was expected causing Lianphunga to panic and to bolt, his village and crops being, therefore, razed to the ground.

Thus in 1890 we find Captain Shakespear established in the South Lushai Hills in charge of the Lungleh, Darzo, and Fort Tregear posts with their lines of communication from Demagri. Captain Browne was established at Fort Aijal as first political officer in May of this year, but from the outset this tragic figure was faced with difficulties he had had no part in creating.

Captain Browne was charged with causing the capture of this evasive Sailo Chief, who had managed to evade Colonel Skinner and Mr. Daly. For this purpose he soon summoned a conference of North Lushai Chiefs whom he met at a mound which was just North of Aijal, later the site of the District Jail. Captain Browne's efforts proved abortive and the meeting broke up but unfortunately not before the Chiefs scented that, as a result of the Political Officer's failure to obtain support of the Lushai Chiefs to deliver Lianphunga, he might be embarking on a visit to the Chief Commissioner of Assam. There and then the Chiefs

organised a plot to do Captain Browne to death. On his way down the Sairang road on his journey to Shillong, when he was approaching Changsil, a Lushai ambush fell upon him and injured him so severely that he died shortly after he was able to make Changsil. The success of the Lushai attack was due to the treachery of the Chief Than-ruma who met Captain Browne on the road with all outward show of friendliness and hospitality while secretly he sent word on in advance to his accomplices enabling them to launch their dastardly attack.

The situation which developed was serious and might have been worse had Changsil been held by less courageous and resourceful leaders than Surgeon-Captain Melville and Lieutenant Cole (later Sir H. W. G. Cole), who managed to hold out in the post till reinforcements arrived by the Dhaleswari river in September, 1890, after losing Captain Swinton and two Sepoys who were shot dead in the boats by Lushais concealed in the jungles along the river banks.

Punitive measures were taken by Mr. McCabe, I.C.S. (later killed in the great earthquake in Shillong in 1897), on a wide scale, after he had taken over as Political Officer, North Lushai Hills at Aijal. Several Chiefs including KHALKHAMA, LIANPHUNGA, and THANGULA were deported to India. The Lushais have a habit of finding nicknames for people and Mr. McCabe was soon known as LALMANTU, which means the Chief catcher or he who catches the Chief. Medals were awarded by Government for these punitive operations.

It was Mr. McCabe who wrote the following note just prior to launching his victorious campaign against the brave and well-known chief, PAWIBAWI SAILO in 1892 :—

“I cannot reiterate too strongly how firmly I am convinced that burning a Lushai village and then withdrawing is no punishment. We must hunt the enemy down from camp to camp and jhum to jhum, destroy his crops and granaries and force them by want and privation to accede to our terms. We cannot expect the chance of a fair stand-up fight and in Jungle warfare of the type met with in these hills, we must anticipate that one's losses in actual

fighting will exceed those of the enemy. Exposure and starvation are our strongest allies and with their assistance I believe that the Lushais will very shortly be craving for peace.

"A raid and the acquisition of a head is a wholeday performance, but the real business of a Lushai's life is to acquire means of subsistence by agriculture, and he cannot afford to ignore the latter for the pleasure of undue indulgence in the former.

"Although the present season of the year is a most difficult one for campaigning it has the advantage of affording us the opportunity of causing the Lushais greater loss than at any other period of the year."

In pursuance of these relief and punitive measures local officers made contact with representatives from Burma, in order to allay the idea that white Officers were themselves, like the Lushais, often rival Chiefs! Also it was made clear that tribute, portorage, and supplies on payment, were to be provided on demand. In spite of these measures, however, extensive trouble again broke out in 1892. Some Chiefs from East Lushai organised a brutal raid on BARUNICHERRA TEA ESTATE, forty-two people being killed and thirteen made captive. Monierkhal was also raided. The Political Officer, North Lushai, managed to keep the Chiefs in the west part of the district from becoming implicated in these risings. In May, 1892, however, LALBURA's stronghold in the East was completely sacked as retribution for these assaults. The whole of the hot weather, 1892, was spent in hostilities.

The South was also in a state of unrest. In February, 1891, the Political Officer, Mr. Murray, was attacked and nearly captured, having to fly for his life through the fields in unsatisfactory circumstances altogether. A punitive expedition was hurriedly organised but failed to capture the PAWI Chief ZAKAPA with whom Mr. Murray had fallen out.

In the next year, Captain Shakespear, while countering the open hostility of LALTHUAMA, son of ROPUILIANI, Chieftainness of DENLUNG, who later died in the Jail at Chittagong, found himself vigorously besieged in an advanced post he had occupied at Chhiphir, the village

having been captured from VANSANGA. In fact it was only through the loyalty and friendship of LALLUAUVA Sailo of BUALPUI that Captain Shakespear was able to hold out till relief came in the form of a column from the North under Captain Rose of the first seventh Gurkhas. Lungleh, Captain Shakespear's base, had been continually attacked and supply convoys had frequently to risk and beat off the attacks and ambushes of the Lushais. In these operations Captain Shakespear received considerable support from a loyal friend, one PU DARA RALTE interpreter, who, well over 90, is still alive to remember the tales. While Captain Shakespear's force was besieged in Vansanga's village of CHHIPHIR¹ Vansanga's mother, the Chieftainness of ZOTE, laid a trap for Captain Shakespear by inviting him to come out to visit her as she wished to be on friendly terms with him. But Dara smelt a rat, so said to the Captain, "Do not be foolish, you do not yet understand the minds of the Lushai people, they are deceiving us. We shall all be killed unless we take a strong force of men". So the force set out and, true enough, were suddenly attacked, but the Captain himself led an assault on the village which was captured. Bugler DOLUTA Lushai saved the Captain's life when he was standing on a large stone outside the Chief's house after all had fled except one man, who was in hiding and about to shoot down Captain Shakespear. The bugler shot the man skilfully just in time.

In order to follow up this success Captain Shakespear pressed on to the village at LUNGRANG and marching at night he ran into an old Lushai woman who was fleeing from Lungrang where many Lushais were collecting, evidently massing to attack Captain Shakespear. On arrival at the village they found themselves overlooked by a massive precipice, on the top of which were the Lushai armies. Dara said to the Captain: "If we force the attack we shall all be killed". The Captain replied: "What matter? More and more Sipais will take our place". The Lushais wished to begin the fight and were mocking at the British force. "Let Captain Shakespear and Dara come up to us and we will make peace". But Dara shouted

¹ Not on map, twenty miles north of Lungleh.

back: "Then come down here and we will agree". The British opened fire but with no effect, because all the shots went up to the sky. The Lushais shouted down "The Sipais have many rifles and can shoot quickly. Let them first wear themselves out, they cannot touch us, we will shoot down on them and throw down our rocks on them—if to-day we do not get Captain Shakespear's head, as well as Dara's, we are not our fathers' sons". But the Engineers with Captain Shakespear had skilfully reconnoitred another approach to the rock heights to the rear and while the attention of the Lushais was all centred on the frontal and abortive firing, a party of thirty rifles sprang a rear attack and the Lushais panicked, the village falling to Captain Shakespear. Later Captain Shakespear, in conversation with Pu DARA, said he felt that he must hurry up and restore peace by capturing many more Chiefs. Pu Dara said that was easy and suggested that Captain Shakespear should call a conference at a certain place and as they came fall upon them and so capture them. But the Captain told Pu DARA that he must think of some better method as the British Government did not do things in that sort of way. So Pu DARA then suggested they try to catch Vansanga, the biggest and most elusive Chief in this area, and Pu Dara said he had information that he was lying up in a field with a few houses only, and that he was not in any large village. Pu Dara at this time was very apprehensive of his own position because he felt that Captain Shakespear could not but rely to a tremendous extent on himself which made his position one of very serious responsibility. Nevertheless, they decided to fall upon Vansanga at a place called CHERIBAWK,¹ hoping their information was correct. To put the Lushais off they started out in one direction with great eclat, but returned late at night, springing a surprise attack on the unsuspecting hamlet. Vansanga was easily captured by Mr. Plowden and Pu Dara, who seized Vansanga while still in a drunken sleep. He was bound and taken prisoner, being sent to jail in Lungleh, but as he was in bad health he was released very soon, only to die in his village.

¹ Not on map.

In this way the South was gradually subdued.

Of Lalluauva, the Chief of Bualpui, who had stood by Captain Shakespear, the latter wrote the following testimonial which is in the possession of the Chief's successors :—

"I have known Mr.¹ Lalluauva for sixteen years. When we first occupied Lungleh in 1889 he was one of the first to come forward and assist us. When Zakapa attacked Mr. Murray, Lalluauva headed the party which helped us with transport and supplies. When the outbreak occurred in 1892 it was only owing to Lalluauva's personal influence that all the villages of his relations did not join the rebels. Throughout these anxious times when we were being assailed at every point it was Lalluauva who kept communications open between Lungleh and us. When any party was on the move Lalluauva used to send a patrol of his men to see there were no ambushes. On one occasion his men dislodged an ambush only half an hour before Mr. Daly with a small escort went by. If Lalluauva's family had turned against us then we should have been in very bad straits and I consider it was only his influence that kept them faithful. I trust every British Officer will remember the good work done by this Chief."

In Camp—RAMRI : 3.2.1905.

JOHN SHAKESPEAR (Major).

By the end of 1892 it was thought that repetition of any combined resistance was unlikely. The West had suffered severely in 1890 and were clearly desirous of remaining friendly ; Captain Shakespear had effectively subdued the South. The Haolongs, towards the south of Aijal, had accepted the new situation, while it was true Kairuma Sailo Chief of South-East Lushai Land remained strong and unbeaten in any way. It was of this latter Chief and his following that Mr. A. N. DAVIS, I.C.S., when Political Officer, North Lushai Hills, gave it as his opinion that it was this group which might possibly give early trouble.

Administration was at this period being slowly consolidated. A conference was held in Calcutta in 1893, at which

¹ A more appropriate prefix would have been "Pu" rather than the English term "Mr."

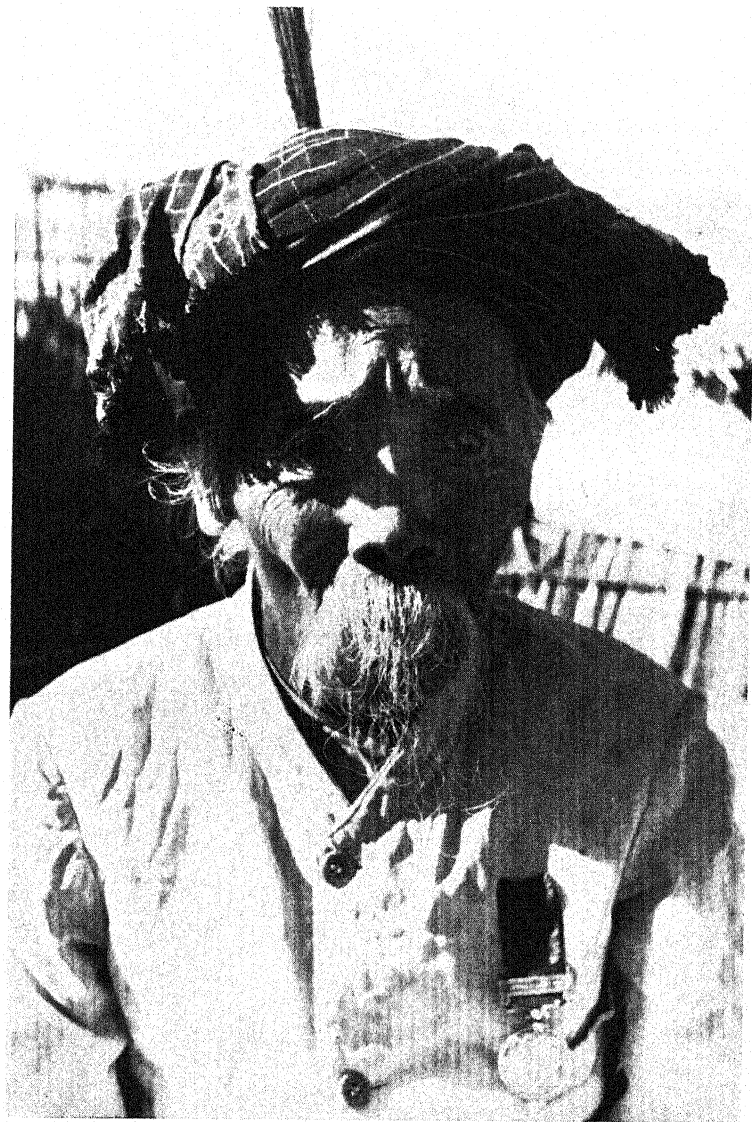
it was proposed that the North Lushai Hills of the Government of Assam and the South Lushai Hills of the Government of Bengal should be amalgamated as one district, a proposal which materialised in 1898. The Calcutta Conference agreed to proceed in the meantime with a programme which included an extension of bridle paths, telegraphic communications, and demarcations of the boundaries of Chiefs' lands. In the light of the years which have since gone by, it is not possible to avoid wondering what great advantages to all concerned might have accrued if in this very amalgamation the Burma hills had also been included.

Mr. Davis' apprehensions as regards that great and strong-minded ruler, Pu Kairuma Sailo, proved only too true in 1895, when he declined to meet a demand for portorage or to pay a fine in default. Forces from Burma and Aijal synchronised their movements in rather a spectacular way by descending upon Kairuma's country¹ on the very same day. As the original fine had been enhanced and since remained unpaid, Kairuma's village was burned and many Mithan, i.e. hill cattle, seized. Pu Kairuma Sailo wisely capitulated, guns were surrendered, and all fines paid.

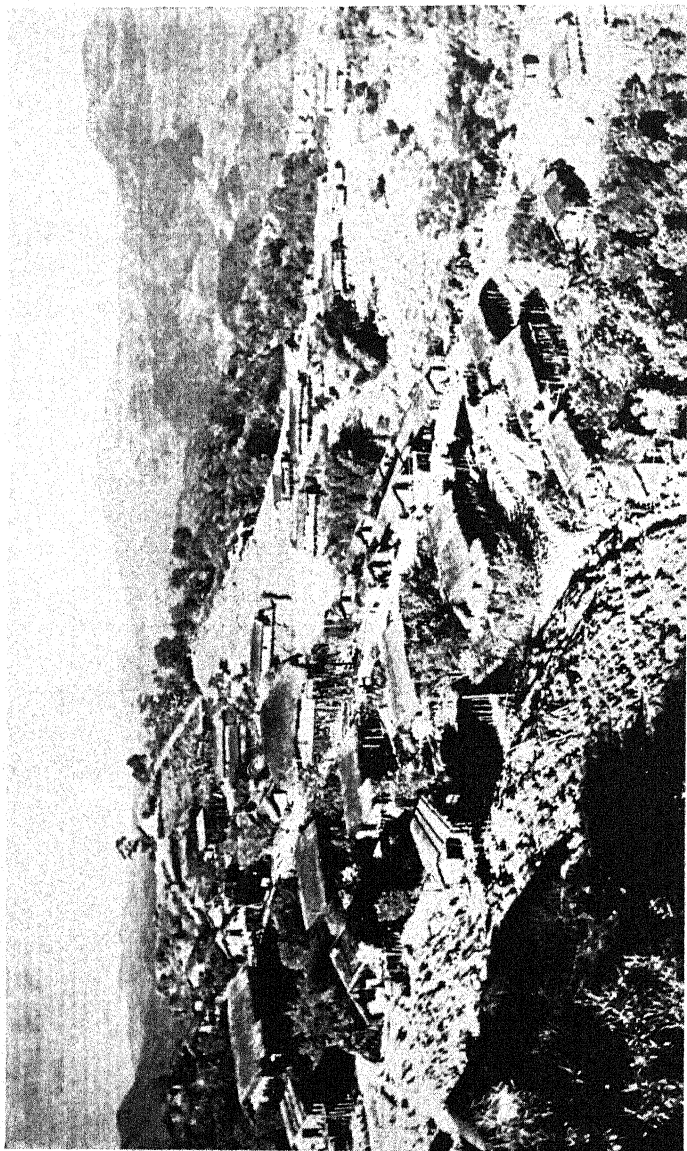
This marked the last gesture of resistance to British rule and the Lushais settled down to accept the new conditions with stoical sagacity. The hitherto unwritten Lushai language was quickly reduced to writing in Roman character by the missionaries and schools were opened. A system of appropriate administration, conceived by Colonel John Shakespear, was introduced and guns limited to a scale of one to every fifteen houses. This system of administration has endured, in all its main features, to this day, and its suitability is a tribute to the genius of its conception.

In 1930 it was necessary to take over one more area known as Lakherland—the tract in the extreme south of the Lushai Hills which had remained unadministered and had for long given, in traditional raiding and head hunting manner, intermittent cause for annoyance and uncertainty. Since 1930 the people have remained friendly

¹ South of Champhai.



PU DARA RALTE,
Colonel John Shakespeare's faithful friend and interpreter, over 90 years of age.



PHULLEN VILLAGE

The curved roof of the Zawlbuk or bachelors' barrack can be seen in the centre of the picture,

and peaceful, and are subject to the general system of administration in vogue in the rest of the district.

This history shows conclusively that here was a tract of land, at the very height of the so-called period of British Imperialism, which the British Government refused, unwisely, to take over for many years until the lives of British subjects and their property lacked all security. Here was no land flowing in milk and honey, no glittering outcrops to raise thoughts of mineral wealth, no telling indications of reservoirs of endless oil. Barren, mountainous, and severe, in any case commercially uninspiring, Lushai had been rejected for so many years. There are traces that financial considerations may have overruled principle, so often the case where bureaucratic or political leaders wish to show spectacular results in their time, rather than be the men to handle the muddy end of the stick and spend on what is necessary rather than on what may give satisfaction.

Yet even now those for whom the administration of the time extended its scope in their material interest are fast forgetting the insecurities from which they have been protected and in some cases are ingeniously disposed to evade the financial implications which are, on all moral grounds, inseparable from the protection secured.

After all, to provide security for commercial enterprise in the plains, the Lushai people have been called on to pay the price, have been thrown off their balance, their lives and social system invaded and dislocated. Their protection and hopes of development are deemed to lie in the machinery conceived for their special treatment under the Government of India Act of 1935, under the provisions of which the Lushais, and other people similarly situated, have been declared to be excluded from the operations of the Provincial Legislatures. Cynics have been heard to say that this exclusion extends to development, finance, and in fact all help which the great British Parliament had in mind in selecting such areas for special consideration and assistance. Be that as it may, many will say that they have received much benefit. Peace prevails and population steadily increases, while literacy spreads, and aid, in matters

of communications and medicine, is afforded. Later in this book the whole question of encouragement of the people to develop themselves within their own competence and genius receives close examination.

But from this foregoing account of Lushai history it is fair to deduce some characteristic traits in the general make up of the Lushai mind. He is crafty, clever, and determined, to the point of obstinacy. Resourceful and brave in battle he is capable of frenzied cruelty in victory. The means justify the ends at the cost of any duplicity, such ability affording greater power over others. The quest for power is rarely absent, in some form or degree, from any enterprise, big or small. The Lushai is a master in jungle craft and is capable of the greatest physical endurance and achievement. He will engage on a venture of far reaching implications on any whim. The tendency to excess pervades every phase of Lushai life.

It is difficult not to perceive in the course of this history much that is common to contemporary experience. We see events as the offspring of our own appeasement, the unbending, uncompromising menace of the rebel son determined to hammer at the very roots of his family's long tradition. We see remedy take the shape of expensive and considerable effort backed by healthy and resolute strength. We are living, even now, in a period of paying once again this high price for just the same reason, namely capitulation to the allurements of "expediency" while "principle" calls unheeded.

But for a still closer view of the Lushai mind let us delve into the mental pictures which he formed of the spirits which ruled his life. Before touching on his customs a glance also at his folk-lore will afford an additional insight into the Lushai outlook on things in general.

CHAPTER III

SPIRIT GLIMMERINGS

BEFORE the occupation of their land by the British the Lushais were wholly animists. Perhaps one method of clarifying some of the implications of the cult of animism is by quoting Mr. Risley in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (1907-1909) which summarises the idea of animism current at that time as follows :—‘ It conceives of man as passing through life surrounded by a ghostly company of powers, elements, tendencies, mostly impersonal in their character, shapeless phantasms of which no image can be made and no definite idea can be formed. Some of these have departments or spheres of influence of their own : one presides over cholera, another over smallpox, another over cattle disease ; some dwell in rocks, others haunt trees, others, again, are associated with rivers, whirlpools, waterfalls, or strange pools hidden in the depths of the hills. All of them require to be diligently propitiated by reason of the ills which proceed from them, and usually the land of the village provides the means for their propitiation.’

The results of research into the cult of animism by anthropologists since that time are omitted here, as the whole subject is too technical and specialised for any general reader.

Animism dies hard. It is only comparatively recently that enlightenment has banished the paralysing conception that the evil spirit must have entered the babe as it lay delirious with fever or in convulsions or acute indigestion. Modern practice retains the symbol only. When a ship is launched it is a bottle of champagne which is lavishly destroyed rather than the surrender of a hapless human as in former days. The warrior's horse is now only led to the graveside instead of being buried with him to take him on and on during his long journey to the next distant, unknown world. Much of modern spiritual concept seems

founded upon animism and may well be derived from the narrowing of the doubts—the substitution of service to one all powerful deity to replace attempts at propitiating the endless and confusing spirits of other days.

In seeking then to penetrate the heart of the Lushai we must always bear in mind that at least, traditionally, he is an animist at heart and in his approach to all problems and impacts. His mind cannot easily dwell objectively on a problem concerning a person or an institution without subconsciously contemplating the spirit association. This accounts, in some degree, for the virility of his conception of the world of the spirits which is marked by the variety of its possibilities. On the basis of this association with the Supernatural, the Lushai would claim to be a highly cultured man rather than a savage. The reactions, and in fact the actions, of a savage would be inconsistent ; in short they would be savage in the true and less provincial sense of the word. The actions or reactions of a Lushai to any given situation or phenomena would be influenced by a basic conception of its spiritual importance. The Lushai would react consistently and not savagely or haphazardly. It was this in the Lushai that showed him cultured in the midst of a desert of superficialities, cultured because his social values depended upon a consistency of clear-cut behaviour and decor. Old Lushais believed naturally in the existence of one supreme God, a god of all humanity and goodness ; but their spiritual repose was disturbed by spirits of evil known as RAMHUAIS, who had to be propitiated perpetually, so that KHUAVENG, the spirit of kindness and magnanimity, could bring comfort. It was the RAMHUAIS who brought illness or injuries to humanity and who punished the breakers of oaths.

The general impression was that there were about fifteen known RAMHUAIS or spirits who were of outstanding importance in relation to specific phases of some of life's more common experiences, though the army of spirits was legion. They were not visible entities and, consequently, were not killable. But if, perchance, a RAMHUI was somehow seen in a trance or as a fleeting vision, tradition directed that no attempt or challenge should be made. A



BOGEY ! BOGEY !

To keep all away from the jhum camp house.
A monkey's skull, stuffed with cotton.



A tiger lies dead. The killer must perform a sacrifice so that he can lead the spirit of the dead tiger when at length he enters on the long road to the Mithihkua, the dead man's village. If he does not perform a sacrifice the tiger's spirit would surely torment him on his way, bring irritating flies, and generally persecute his soul.

Note the sacred scabbard of brass and coloured black and red lacquer.

sorcerer, being a man or woman, was in quite a different category and when, or if, detected in evil deeds, could well be killed. On the other hand, a Priest was by no means a master of the RAMHUAIS or spirits. He was competent to perform as an ambassador, a go-between, in dealing with the spirits, and a skilful and wise priest was considered to have the power of successfully intervening on occasions. It was also recognised that a sorcerer could cause death by utterances—though a RAMHUAIS possessed illimitable power, mitigated only at incomprehensible times by the kindness of the spirit of all goodness, Khuaveng.

The RAMHUAIS were believed by man to be of queer varying shapes, some resembling humans, others grotesque and huge in stature above the ordinary humans. Some had curly hair, or eyes set in a vertical line down the centre of the brow. Some were believed to have massive bosoms hanging ludicrously downwards or to have only one leg. But as the RAMHUAIS had the faculty of taking on any shape, no constancy has ever been attached to their form. Besides no one has ever really seen a RAMHUAIS in its supernatural setting, at least that is the belief and, if any one alleges he has, his story is usually discounted and he himself considered not too nice to know. Such conceptions as there have been emanate from the experiences of dreams or from the furtive disclosures made by those who claim that they have had unusual contact with a RAMHUAIS.

The usual places where RAMHUAIS lived included high mountains, caves, under water, cracks in precipices, large rocks, holes in the earth, water springs or waterfalls, and sometimes large trees. There must be a few of us who have not felt a shudder down our backs as we have been making our way back from a late church service on a country path in deep winter as the wind has gushed through the sighing trees, the raindrops patting out with provocative regularity what must surely be following footsteps; or when out on a wintry night when all the hedges are snow and the mischievous moon lights up a fairyland of shapes from every world, at once mocking and terrifying. No wonder these people of Lushai "felt" their vast and exotic jungle fastnesses. Some RAMHUAIS were more venomous

than others. Phung was very black and large, a frequenter of village streets, who had the power of inculcating madness, the power of causing fits, of making epileptics. KHAWHRING was responsible for much sadness for he could change and ruin the spirit of a person who would then soon be known by all to be possessed of an evil eye. Khawhring was of a gluttonous disposition, consumed by a passion for possessing the riches of others. HMUITHLA, forerunner of death, who would hover round the house where death was fast approaching, and who could sometimes give out eery noises not usually heard. PHEICHHAM the provocative, willing to reward but at a price, for only in return for meeting his wishes, often of a sinister nature, would he make the rewards all knew were there to be had. He is said to have had only one leg yet was so hasty that unless a man could give out immediately what he really wanted Pheichham would depart provokingly calling "You are too slow, too late, for me to grant your wish". Other evil RAMHUAIS were MAIMI, the hypnotiser or troubler during sleep, RAWT, the frightener, TAUMEICHER CHHI, the Lushai WIL O the wisp, CHAUM, the instigator of crab poisoning, TAUL HIK, the skinner of heads, KHAUMU, the human kidnapper, DENG SUR, the demon who would throw stones at people.

The SIKHUI was an important RAMHUI. He it was who could cause sickness through the medium of innocent and clear looking springs. Special sacrifices were offered up with animals for the propitiation of the spirits. Sometimes traps would be set around such springs when special sacrifices would be performed to the spirits of the spring so that they would utter no unusual sound and do nothing to interfere with the capture of approaching deer.

Lashi, the exquisite female spirit of the hunt, the ever naked fairy of all jungle life ; it only needed this spirit to enter the heart of the sportsman when success would unquestionably attend all hunting effort. She is reputed to have lived in the high hills and precipices of LURH and TAN to the east of VANLAIPHAH.

HAUTAH was the bane of women's existence, for this is the RAMHUI who causes wood loads to topple over, baskets to fall, rice to overboil, and things to get lost with no rhyme

nor reason. The only way effectively to propitiate this fidgetty RAMHUI was to make a sort of dandy or chair fit for HAUTAI's mother to ride in, when it was always hoped that HAUTAI would not be so unreasonably restless !

KHUAENG was the glittering fairy who was the creator of all humanity. It was to Khuavang that old Lushai poured out her heart for comfort and protection. To whom else could she appeal when the farmers' huts in the midst of their cultivation began to tremble, shake, and swing to and fro ?

The Lushais themselves do not seem to have been addicted to sorcery on a wide scale as a sort of black magic cult. They were rather victimised by members of other clans within their midst who might at times make a bold bid for power by this means. One method by which such sorcerers might cause death was to create the image of the victim and by weird incantations sing a song of sorcery in the hope of causing death by the sorcerer touching that part of the image he wished as the seat of pain. But such an elaborate procedure was not the only one adopted by sorcerers. Here is the case of KEITAWNA, the sorcerer.

In about the year 1850, Liankhama Sailo, son of VANHNUAAILIANA Sailo, had a village of about 1,000 houses at Zawlinghak. Among these were 150 houses of the RANGTE clan, an offshoot of the HMARS.

One night it so happened that Liankhama's most brave young man, Thangvuka, had a dream in which he saw Keitawna and on this very night his house was filled with smoke and mist of an unprecedented kind. Now Keitawna had the reputation of being a DAWI THIAM or sorcerer, and THANGVUKA became so disturbed with the obvious implications of this dream that he, then and there, decided that Keitawna must die.

Thangvuka set about searching for Keitawna without any success until one day he came upon him felling a tree outside the village. On seeing Keitawna in this way Thangvuka asked him to give him his axe to see how heavy it was and how balanced. Keitawna in all innocence gave the axe to Thangvuka who at once struck Keitawna on the head, felling him and killing him outright. Thangvuka

then cut out the liver from Keitawna's dead body and ate a little of it. His object in doing this had no connection with Keitawna's spirit in the next world, but concerned the need for Thangvuka to neutralise the effect of any evil words which Keitawna may have uttered against Thangvuka's welfare.

After eating his portion of Keitawna's liver, Thangvuka returned to his village and, appearing before the Chief said "Behold me, O Chief Liankhama, I am Thangvuka, the brave man, and it is I who have just killed Keitawna, the Rangte sorcerer". The Chief remained silent.

Shortly after, all the Rangtes appeared before the Chief in fury and in a spirit of revenge against Thangvuka, who by this time had sent away his family and who had already taken up his position of defence by standing at the ready in his house, gun and spear in hand. The Rangtes called upon the Chief to decide whether he wished the friendship of all the Rangtes or whether he preferred to lose them all that he should keep Thangvuka.

But the Chief ordered that they should not kill Thangvuka. Whereon all the Rangtes packed up their families and chattels and made off to Manipur State swearing eternal enmity with one and all of Liankhama's villagers in perpetuity—a situation which persisted, resulting in the mutual taking of heads until peace was enforced by the arrival of the British Government.

Keitawna's particular method of practising sorcery was to call upon his victim, under cloak of flattery to drink first of the Zu at a party. Between his nail and its fingers he would insert a tiny portion of the poison and it would be with this finger in the Zu mug that he would hand the mug to his victim. The victim, having no ground for any suspicion, would thus fall an easy prey to the wiles of this Keitawna.

Shortly after Government took over the administration of Lushai an important incident took place concerning sorcery.

Liankara and Kanglova, two brothers of Dokhuma Sailo, Chief of Chawntleng, were suffering from phthisis. They suspected certain men of their village as being the cause, through sorcery. These men had previously been known, while they were under the influence of Zu, to have threatened

others by claiming to possess, supernatural powers. The Chief decided the accused should be killed. So Leta, Leta's mother, Buka, and Vungbakira were all set upon and killed while the fifth Laikuala fled to HNACHANG village where, however, he was at once killed, as the HNACHANG Chief was related to Dokhuma and knew all the attendant circumstances.

The sick brothers were given pieces to eat from the dead men's livers and were eventually cured, while all the villagers drank of the blood as a prophylactic against any further spread of the dread disease which had, they believed, originated in the evil works of the sorcerers.

This incident, at the time, never reached the ears of Government or its Officers. But on occasions when a stir was being caused by the presence of a suspected sorcerer, Colonel Shakespear, the first Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, adopted a course with that wisdom which was characteristic of all this Officer's work. He would direct that the Chief must sanction no murder because the very personality of the British Government meant in itself an end to all sorcery, but in order to relieve the people in their present very real anxieties he would give the suspected sorcerer twenty-four hours in which to make himself scarce, the man, or woman, being ordered to seek shelter in a village over a hundred miles or so distant. It is admitted that not every society similarly situated would have been willing to condone this merciful settlement and the murder of the five victims retailed above may mark the true feelings of the people. However, the fact that there were comparatively few cases of such murders goes to suggest that, except in the most personal and aggravated of cases, society was willing to accept the Colonel's line of settlement.

Existence after death gave ground for much speculative thought. There was a paradise but its attainment was problematical, while arrival at the dead man's village itself was by no means secure. But steps could be taken which would assist chances in the afterworld, though these were very partial to Lushai men, women's future being less secure. A man who performed the KHUANGCHAWI ceremony mentioned in the next Chapter, or who had managed to seduce seven virgin girls, was considered as being likely

to escape the pellets of PAWLA who stood at the crossroads near the dead man's village and who was sure to hold up the more timid and unsuccessful. A baby who died during infancy was considered to have a good chance of attaining paradise if the parents could press into its hands at death an egg which would naturally roll along the road and all the baby had to do was to follow the egg.

An idea of the practical effect on the daily lives of the people, which these spiritual values have had, may be conceived from the following superstitions. If a moon-moth was seen, or snakes in a position of copulation, it might mean the approach of death. At times of calamity, sudden death, death in the hunt or in war, there would be a day of rest, and death would fall upon any who broke this. Retaining possessions of others which may have been found by chance, cultivating over a field containing a water spring, entering another's house in the absence of the inmates, evil dealing with the insane, and many other objectionable features in behaviour might, and probably would, all result in death.

Whatever the means may have been, the results were suitable for the members of a community living within a limited world, never free from possible attack by enemies or jealous power seekers. The moral standard of society motivated by a terror of the unseen supernatural was certainly very high. It has steadily deteriorated under the sense of the greater security now offered by the protection of Government and the individualism which has characterised the effect, intentionally or unintentionally, of much of the mission's teaching.

The word Chibai is one of the first words any visitor to Lushai will hear as it is now a customary greeting to all. But in ancient days it was this word which preceded the Priest's song when he was commencing to make approach to the spirit whose clemency he was seeking on behalf of the afflicted.

FOLK-LORE

Some insight into a people's folk-lore is not only vital to those wishing to get on to speaking terms with the

modern product, but for the people themselves it should be an essential force in influencing the conduct of its individuals. The tragedy is that the inevitable impacts of stronger, or more uncompromising, culture patterns, inseparable from present day conditions of improved communications and commercial enterprise, almost invariably give rise to a sense of inferiority complex among many of the people. The education offered, often without imagination or real consideration, encourages false hopes of the power that is believed to lie in the printed word at the cost of reliance on the age-long and well-tried tales of indigenous folk-lore. But of the confusion attendant on contacts with fresh cultures more will be said later.

In folk-lore a people can indulge their imagination, can seek to rise above the plane of life's incessant hardship. If there be any romance in our hearts, folk-lore can perpetuate it to serve to remind us of such things in the rough and tumble of the everyday. If there be a love of bravery let it be immortalised for our inspiration through the ages. If we hate cruelty or greed, if we have a genuine love for our land, a respect for our parents or our forebears, a pride in our children, let all this be sung the length and breadth of our land, that the genius of our ancestors may never fade and that all our goodness shall be interred less often with our passing bones.

The terrors of snake bite while weeding the rice fields on the steel hillsides in humid heat and relentless sun can often be temporarily lulled by the lilt of fairy songs, of songs of the brave, and of many epic experiences. The loathsome bleeding of many leech bites, some so irritating as to challenge sanity, can often be mitigated by the recitation of old tales handed down from father to son through many generations, and the mellow family songs of tired cultivators can bring great comfort when darkness falls and all gather round the sweet-smelling fires in the camps far distant from their homes. The lilt of such songs strikes a chord in the heart; they are part and parcel of all that has gone to create Lushai. There may be a silly shame in the hearts of those who seek the bogey of superficial advance—a shame which may be likened to the adolescent who has fears for

the deportment of his parents before his associates at some school function. Surely such shame must be of but a transitory nature.

In recording the tales below, the indigenous staccato-like and sporadic form of utterance has been modified to read as smooth narrative in our own form, the object in giving these tales being to clarify the real feelings and hearts of the people, rather than to give a scientific or anthropological disclosure of the technique of Lushai expression. It is not easy to achieve both ends by either single rendering.

HOW THE MUSHROOM STARTED

Two sisters together were searching larger cucumbers in a field. The younger picked up a number but the other sister seemed unsuccessful. So the elder asked the younger to give her some, but the younger said she wished to take them home so that all could eat them with their own parents. This greatly upset the elder sister who thereupon called on a clay mound in the soil to swallow her up :—

“Swallow me up, O strong clay mound,
my little sister no cucumber can give,
swallow me up, O strong clay mound.”

Then gradually she actually did sink until at last only the top of her head could be seen.

Shortly after when the other sister returned home and her parents came in from the fields, they said to her, “Where is your sister ?”

The younger sister replied truthfully that she had allowed herself to be swallowed up in the ground because she had refused to give her a cucumber. The parents were of course very distressed and told her to go back at once and to try to call her to return. So she went calling :—

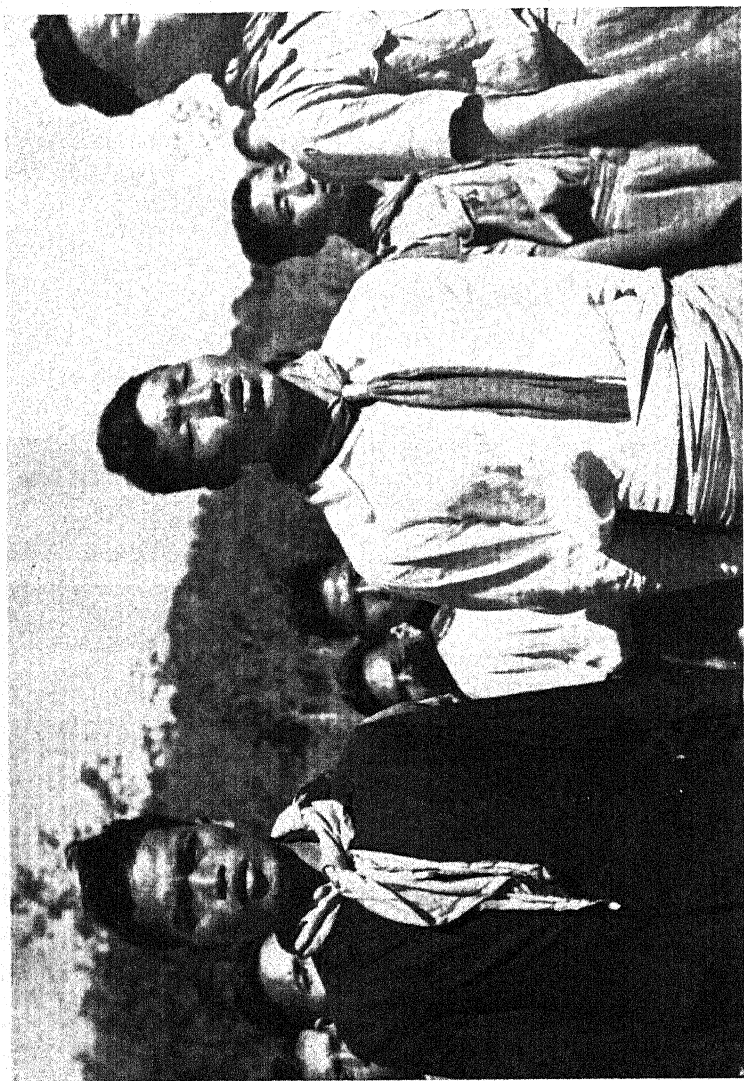
“Sister, sister, please do come back,
Mother will buy you rich amber beads
Father will buy you great brazen bells.”

Her sister then came out rising higher and higher till only her knees remained.

Unhappily just at this stage a cry was raised that the head hunters were coming and so they wrenched at the elder



“THE LEARNER”



LUSHAI BOY SCOUTS SINGING SOMEWHERE NEAR THE BURMA BORDER

Chants have a highland lament. Emotion and a depth of feeling lie behind serious faces.

sister but this caused her to lose her legs which were left in the ground, turning into mushrooms which grow in this way to this day.

REMEMBRANCE FOR POSTERITY

We must love our parents so much we would do anything for them, but we must be over-careful we do nothing which might bring unhappiness to them, no matter what we may feel ourselves.

CHHURA AND CHENGKEK

In Lushai Hills there is a tree which goes by the name of Chengkek. This tree does not grow very tall but its fruit is beautifully red, the outer cover, however, being sour to the taste, though the pulp is juicy and sweet.

One day a man called Chhura, who was very famous in legendary Lushai, was passing by this tree and he became very pleased when he anticipated the taste of the fruit which should be his. He came up to the tree and pulled down the branches laden with fruit but somehow he could not disassociate from the idea of fruit the act of climbing to reach it. In the case of the Chengkek tree the trunk is too slender to bear the weight of a man. So there was silly old Chhura going on pulling down the branches but not pulling the fruit, yet murmuring to himself that if only Nahaia, his friend, was here, he would so easily be able to tackle this problem.

REMEMBRANCE FOR POSTERITY

Those who have no sense of self-reliance and confidence can never expect the fruits of success. Rather must we make it a point to tackle every problem that comes before us with determination, thoroughness, and sense.

CHAWNGCHILHI

Chawngchilhi had a younger sister and the two of them were wont to go to the jhums in order to keep a watch over the crops and to drive away the birds which used to collect nearby to nip off the first ears of the ripening crop. Their father, who was always very felicitous for his

daughters' welfare, used to arrange for them to have a nice tasty tiffin fit for those who were doing such good work every day. Nevertheless, the younger sister seemed to be getting thinner and thinner which greatly worried the indulgent father. So one day he asked the sister of Chawngchilhi what she thought was the reason for her sister getting so thin. But the younger girl asked to be excused on the ground that she dare not say. "I know she will give me a whipping with the green cane on which she hangs her bedding," she said timidly to her father. But the father, thereupon, became insistent and commanded the girl to tell him the truth however distasteful it might be. Shyly and with great shame the younger sister disclosed the astounding fact that Chawngchilhi was wont to allow a serpent dragon to embrace her and that she would even uncloth herself that the serpent might enjoy her to the full. The father became, of course, very distressed and decided to go to the jhum, it being arranged that the younger sister would call the dragon as she had called him when Chawngchilhi desired the embraces of this animal. On arrival at the jhum, as planned, the younger sister called out :—

"Oh, Lover of Chawngchilhi, Oh Lover,
My Mother wishes you so to come,
My Father wishes you so to come."

On hearing the voice of the young sister the serpent gave utterance in romantic and arrogant song singing :—

"Very soon I shall be coming
Beautifully my hair am I dressing
Exquisitely my turban am I tying
For the joy of your arms I am dying."

Then out he came, gliding confidently and gracefully from the jhum with the liveness that had overcome Chawngchilhi. But instead of the embraces of Chawngchilhi, for which he had come, he found himself set upon unexpectedly, the father cutting him in two with his strong hunting dao. The father, now knowing that all was really true, went home and straightway killed his own daughter, Chawngchilhi. Poor Chawngchilhi had already conceived and was about to bring forth the progeny of her unnatural lover so that

when she lay dying many small snakes appeared and started to glide with lissom towards the open jungles; but the father fought with spirit in righteous anger and succeeded in killing all but one which got away. This one grew to a large size and in its hate used to eat up men very frequently. Its cave is known to this day and is situated on the main bridle path out towards Champhai at a place called Ruallung, where even now there is a large hole to be seen.

REMEMBRANCE FOR POSTERITY

A man's honour is worth more to him than life or possessions.

A man's love for his child is such that he would do things which otherwise he could not even think about.

CHEMTATRAWTA

Once upon a time there was a man called CHEMTATRAWTA. He had gone down to the river and seeing a good useful looking stone he sat himself down near by to sharpen up his dao. But he had not been there long before he felt a terrific pain and he found that a lobster had pinched one of his testicles, and he became infuriated. He seized a big bamboo nearby, up which a KHAWM creeper was climbing, but this so enraged the creeper that it stung a wild fowl with its vicious fruit, and the wildfowl became wild with fury also and within no time had scattered away the whole of the unfortunate ants' nest, and the ants in desperation, being in no mood for courtesy, nipped the testicles of a wild boar, who at once, in his pain uprooted a plaintain tree which, crashing down, disturbed a peaceful bat having its daily snooze and seeing an elephant the bat pitched right on to the elephant's very trunk, and this so upset the elephant's dignity that he rushed at the house of a poor old woman, trampling it down underfoot like a matchbox, terrifying the poor old woman so much that she was unable to avoid leaving her excrement too near the village fountain water supply.

The village people, now observing the old woman's

indiscretion, surrounded her in anger and called on her say was that the elephant had pulled down her house to explain why she had done such a vile thing, but all she could and this had upset her. So they went along to the elephant and asked the elephant why he had trampled on the woman's house and the elephant quite quickly said because the bat had actually alighted on his nose, while the bat explained that he had been disturbed by the boar who said he had been bitten on the testicles by the ants who said they would have done nothing if they had been left alone by the wild fowl who said that he had only been upset because of the cruel assault of the Khawm creeper who blamed Chemta-trawta who then was also very angry and exclaimed that he only cut down the bamboo on account of the pain caused him by the lobster who had nipped his testicle. So it came about that at last the lobster was called on by all to explain what he had meant by such an insolent assault.

The lobster now found himself in an awkward position and murmured hesitantly "Er-Er-Er-if you put me into the fire I will become red, and if you put me back into the water again I will become pale".

So the people not being satisfied put him into a fire and the lobster became redder and redder—so they put him into the water and he became paler and paler but he was able very soon to recover from the heat so swam off again trying to make for his river home, but before he could reach it the men chased him and with a hnathial¹ stick tried to kill him. Although they could not do this the unfortunate lobster was so injured by the hnathial stick that he died. But before he actually died he cursed the hnathial stick saying: "Curse on you for your cruelty to me—let you die down before again your seeds can mature", which may account for the scarcity of such plants to this day and for the fact that they do not mature before they die down.

REMEMBRANCE FOR POSTERITY

Take care of our actions. If we make a mistake beware lest we put others to trouble. Our actions are often reflected on many far beyond our realisation.

¹ Hnathial—*Zingiberacæ*, *Phrynium Capitatum* (Parry).



“COMFORT IN POSTERITY”



LIANGAUA SAILO CHIEF

PAWLA AND SANUI

There was a certain place at which the various roads leading to the village of death all happened to meet. It was at this place that Pawla and Sanui had their house. It really meant that all the spirits of the dead, on their way home, had to pass by the dwelling-house. There was an alternative route but that involved walking through a road neck deep in stinging caterpillars, so that hardly anyone considered this way.

The roads leading to the place where the dwelling-house of Pawla and Sanui was situated were used by the spirits according to the origin of their death. For instance, there was a road for those who had died unnatural deaths—for those who had died at childbirth—and for those who had died HLAMZUIH.¹

Now it was Pawla's practice to shoot pellets at the spirits as they passed by, except that he never hurt the spirits of those who had died Hlamzuih, though his wife used to compel these to pick out the lice from her hair. If the spirit of a baby picked out a lice she used to make the baby kill the lice between its teeth. It is for this reason that a Lushai baby is always given rice at death to put in its hands so that it can slip away the nasty lice from Sanui without her seeing them, while in reality it can bite the rice.

Of course Pawla could not have it all his own way for he dared not shoot pellets at a man whose spirit had been properly speeded and been taken care of through the ceremonies entitling him to the rank of Thangchhuah only attained by those who sacrifice many animals and give many feasts.

The man who had performed the Thangchhuah ceremony properly was well looked after in the next world. For instance, assuming he had been brave and killed a cobra, some deer, and many other animals, the procession to the village of the dead man would take the following form:—

The deer with the cobras wound round the antlers would come first while the eagles he had shot would flutter and fly around the deer's antlers—all being followed by the animals

¹ HLAMZUIH—Infants of under a year or socially miserable people for whom sacrificial animal is provided at death.

he had killed in single file, while the dead man himself would be well protected from the sun by the clever little Vahluks,¹ who would fly between him and the sun.

All Pawla could do, therefore, was to squint ignominiously through a small hole in his wall.

So it was very important both for those on earth, and those who had died, that the Thangchhuah ceremony should be properly conducted.

REMEMBRANCE OF POSTERITY

As we have to go to the village of the dead men it is very important that we should conduct ourselves with honour, bravery, and great consideration for all our fellows while we are on this earth.

THE WIDOW'S SON

A widow's son once fell in love with a Chief's beautiful daughter. The Chief's daughter was very flattered for the son was a very pleasant fellow, if somewhat of a shy disposition. On the first visit, as he was going away, the Chief's daughter gave him a needle to remember her by and he put this in the roof of the house after he returned.

The next morning he told his mother about this and she said: "Oh you should have carefully slipped this into the cloth of your coat pocket".

On his next visit his lover gave him a penknife.

So he put this into his pocket, but left it with the blade open so it cut his coat. On seeing this his mother said to him "You should have closed up the penknife before putting it in your pocket".

On the next visit his lover gave him a goat. Remembering what his mother had told him about the penknife he tried to compress the legs of the goat and to put the goat inside his pocket, which, of course resulted in his coat again being torn to smithereens. His mother then said "You should have tied a rope round its neck and led it home".

On the next visit his lover gave him the thigh of a pig

¹ Vahluk—Flying squirrel—though this is nocturnal in this world it may be bolder in the dead man's village!

and remembering his mother's advice he put a string round it and so led it back to his home. But on the way the dogs and the fowls had followed him and eaten up this precious gift. On seeing this the mother was now rather angry and said he should have laid it on a dish and brought it home.

On the next visit his lover gave him a cow and remembering his mother's advice he tried to place the cow on a dish but, of course, failed so came running to his mother to ask her what to do. She said that he should have put a rope round its neck and led it to the cowshed, and there fettered it.

On the next visit his lover agreed to give herself to him for him to love in his arms, so at once remembering his mother's advice he put a rope round her neck and led her to the cowshed where he tied her. When he told his mother what he had done she rebuked him soundly and said to him "My son you are no son but a fool. When such a beautiful girl was ready to give herself to you, you should have brought her to our house and in the quiet you should have held her breasts and made her love you so that you could have made her your wife and lived happily for ever."

On hearing his mother's words the son realised what a fool he had been and rushed to the cowshed, but his lover had gone, so he rushed like a madman to the Chief's house, but the Chief's daughter would now have nothing to do with him and severely sent him about his business.

REMEMBRANCE FOR POSTERITY

Like closing the stable gate when the horse has flown. The story also shows that even good acts at the wrong time can create confusion and unhappiness. We must use our intelligence in each and every act.

CHAWNGMAWII AND HRANGCHHUANA

It so happened long ago that there was, in two adjacent villages, a young man and a young maiden, each famed for their beauty.

These two came secretly both to know and love each other which was not an easy thing seeing that they were not

of the same village and that no one ever knew when hostilities between the villages might break out.

As time went on and Hrangchhuana found access to the other village less difficult he became greedy and grasping and started to take away from Chawngmawii's village, each time he visited her, a little boy or girl. This caused the villagers to be greatly concerned so that they set to work to build a great wall round the village, sprinkling some wood ash carefully so as to cause it to accept the foot pattern of any who might enter the village or leave it.

Hrangchhuana was, however, also an intelligent man and he used to approach the wall facing in the opposite direction, leaving in the same way so that to the villagers who were closely engaged in keeping a strict watch among themselves it seemed the thief was rather leaving the village than entering it.

However, one fatal night Hrangchhuana, being by now a little less careful, fell straight into the arms of some of the guards who were, at the time, on duty on behalf of the protection of the village. At once they seized him, bound him, and brought him to the centre of the village where he lay powerless and at their mercy.

The Chief then decreed it was essential to discover if there was in the village any woman with whom Hrangchhuana might be having an intrigue and who was, therefore, a traitor within their midst and he directed that each young woman should walk over him, their legs either side of his body, which was of course in itself a very shameful thing for a man to have to bear. Each young woman, raising her skirts, treated him to this indignity, while some actually urinated upon him, until it came to the turn of Chawngmawii who had been holding back. Chawngmawii went forward but when she reached him all she could do was to fall down to him and embrace him covering him with even her own cloth, crying, "Oh, Chhuana, my Dearest one."

A loud shout went up all round as the people called for Hrangchhuana's death. He was then and there slain and his head was tied up on a tall tree for all to see, just near the village gate. Poor Chawngmawii was in misery and

as the people came by throwing mud and dirt at his withering face she climbed up with water to keep the face from remaining dirty and unlovely.

Hrangchhuana had had fears that he might well be caught and thus slain, so he had said to Chawngmawii—"when, if ever, I am caught and slain, take my head to my parents and when they ask you if you would accept some reward ask for the ball of thread which I have left in the thul (basket) in my parents' house."

As soon as opportunity offered, Chawngmawii took down the head and went secretly to the house of Hrangchhuana's parents, and when she arrived at the door she sang:—

"Open to me, oh parents of Chhuana,
The head of beloved Hrangchhuana
Here I bring to your door."

The parents though very sad greatly appreciated Chawngmawii's action in thus redeeming the head of their poor son and they asked her to come in and to name any reward which they might be able to afford her, whereon she sang again:—

"I want not everything,
I want but a little thing,
Give me the thread ball
That in the basket is stored."

The parents were very surprised that she should ask for so little and for such a trifling thing but they did not know that hidden away inside this was Hrangchhuana's most precious possession, a certain bead. This bead poor Chawngmawii kept as a token of her beloved.

But her joy was short lived, for when the villagers got to know that she had removed the head and given this to the parents, they decided she must also die.

So they killed her also and neither of these young lovers remained on earth any longer. But the spirit of their faithful love, even to death, lives on to this day, for on any fine starry night there will you see in the sky two bright stars, the bigger and brighter being that of Chawngmawii¹ and he smaller and less bright that of Hrangchhuana.²

¹ Chawngmawii—Venus.

² Hrangchhuana—Jupiter.

As stars they are lovers to this day and from time to time can be seen in the sky growing nearer to each other. Some young men in the old days used to think that their efforts at being successful with their lovers would be crowned with unmitigated success, if these stars were very near together in the skies.

REMEMBRANCE FOR POSTERITY

If we wish to pursue the path of love, always likely to be thorny, we should beware of encroaching on the rights and possessions of others, but if by arrogance or foolishness we are detected in fault then, rather than sacrifice the honour of the girl we truly love, submit to any indignity.

SIBUTA AND DARLAI

Once upon a time there was a powerful Chief who was accustomed to be denied nothing. He was arrogant, selfish, and a bad man, but at one time, very powerful.

On this occasion he coveted a beautiful girl named Darlaii who lived in his village. It was not that he was capable of a great love for her, a desire to make her his wife, and to make her as queen in his home, but he wished to ravish her, so much did the beauty of her face and the graceful movement of her lithe body attract him. But the fatal day came when Darlaii rejected his approaches, which angered him very much, and he vowed a deep vengeance.

Sibuta, the Chief, decided to hold a Khuangchawi ceremony, which is one of the most important feasts that the Lushais performed. On the first night a large gayal was killed and there was much merrymaking and Zu drinking in the Chief's house, where Darlaii also was a guest.

The next morning Sibuta, to wreak his vengeance on Darlaii, ordered the young men to seize her and, bind her and to lead her up and down the village streets like the gayals are lead before they are killed. Having nothing whatever to show against Darlaii, the Chief Sibuta gave it out that when he was a young man Darlaii's father had stuffed fowl's dung into his mouth, which, of course, was quite a lie.

As Darlaii was being led up and down the streets of the village her mother was beside herself with grief, and

tried to allow her water, but Sibuta twisted the mother's hands and away went the precious water. Sibuta ordered the young men also to remove much of her clothing and to beat her with cruel canes and sticks. The young men themselves were very distressed but dare not disobey. They gave her water when out of sight of Sibuta and also procured cool leaves for her to relieve her stinging body.

But there was worse to come for the next day Sibuta himself with a spear came up to Darlaih, bound helpless as she was, and pierced her to death at the Seluphan, where the gayals for sacrifice are always killed.

Darlaih's mother was so grieved she was beyond comfort. But no such cruelty can escape retribution and that very night, in the Chief's house sparkling and ferocious fireballs appeared in a terrifying manner all along the roof and all the ceremony had to be stopped, for all were afraid of great evil.

In due course, not long after, Sibuta died an indescribable death shortly followed by his wife.

REMEMBRANCE FOR POSTERITY

For evil and cruelty we cannot escape retribution.

MONKEY AND BEAR

Once upon a time there lived a monkey whose great delight was to swing merrily in the air, even at the cost of his meals. One day while he was swinging away with his little eyes blinking, looking here and there, the whites showing up clearly when in ecstasy he would be a swinging high then low, a big cumbersome bear appeared near the swing.

So, seeing the joy which the monkey was experiencing, he asked the monkey—"Monkey, will you please let me sit on your swing that I may enjoy myself for a little."

The monkey replied quite politely: "I am afraid my swing is hardly strong enough to hold such a big man as yourself. Before you could get on I must climb up to see if it is securely fastened on to these two trees."

But the monkey, when he climbed to the top, secretly gnawed through the ropes in such a way that the swing ropes would not stand much weight. However, when

the monkey came down he said to the bear in quite an off hand way: "Now I think you can have a try." So the bear got on.

As soon as the bear got on, the monkey, already counting his chickens before they were hatched, started to prepare for himself a big meal, saying to himself: "Soon the bear will swing too high and come down with such a bang that he will surely kill himself, and he will make for me a very sweet meal, as all bears taste so rich and sweet."

It was not long before he heard the bear falling and he at once raced to the swing only thinking of the meal he hoped to have very shortly. When he got there, instead of finding a bear which was dead, he found one which was furious and angry. To try and hide his own discomfiture the monkey said to the bear: "I heard you falling from my swing and so I came running to help you and have brought some food."

The bear, however, had seen through the monkey's wicked device. Lunging at the monkey he only just missed him, but the monkey had to make off up to the tree tops and there wait while he saw the bear eat up the carefully prepared meal he had intended for himself and neither could he now swing. So the bear adequately turned the tables on the monkey for his wickedness.

REMEMBRANCE FOR POSTERITY

To cheat those who wish us no harm is to make trouble for ourselves needlessly.

HUNTING PARTY TO TAN

A long time back now the Lushais were in occupation of the more Eastern corner of the present Lushai Hills where there was a village known by the name of Bualte. Some young men from this village decided to go out together on a hunting expedition and they ferreted out this bush and that, climbing here and there, but with no great success. One of their party, Chalchima, came to a very steep cliff, but, nothing daunted, he set about starting to climb what really looked a human impossibility. After a time he reached a sort of horizontal ledge in the

precipitous cliffside and, just managing to scramble on to this, his companions saw him disappear. But he put his head over and shouted to them to continue the hunt as he would still try to climb further and keep up above them to take in his stride any game that might be headed by them. But to his consternation no sooner had he looked round than he saw he was at the head of a wide cave, within which sat a most beautiful nymph, radiant and alluring, her hair in long strands down her shoulders and bedecked with lovely rose pink flowers.

Chalchima at once fell in love with her as she looked so exquisite, seated, weaving herself a cloth of many colours. So he approached her and made court to her, eliciting that her name was Thangi's elder sister. After some time Thangi's elder sister motioned to him that if he went down towards some thick jungle amid some trees, to which she pointed, he would surely come upon a wild gayal. But Chalchima was spellbound by her charm and grace and all thoughts of hunting seemed to him impossible.

In due course the evening calm fell on all around, the sun casting its autumnal and golden rays against the cliffs, the birds re-appearing from their little hiding places among the trees, when Chalchima sidled up a little nearer to this nymph that had held him spellbound. But just then she suddenly rolled up her cloth and her loom and disappeared out of sight, leaving Chalchima in a loneliness accentuated by the fragrance of his new found goddess. Reluctantly he had to decide that he must return, or he might even die, for the descent down the cliff face would be no less easy than his ascent had been.

So singing out to the wide expanse of forest and colours he sang :—

“The sun is sinking as I am homing.

Wish me my home, Oh ! beautiful maiden.

“With your spirit still with me

To my Mother will I sing of you.

“Sustain me in this pain of parting,

Oh ! Maiden, oh ! beautiful mountain nymph.”

He then started down the cliff face and remembered to follow the exact path pointed out to him by the maiden

and true enough, not far from his camp, he shot a magnificent horned gayal.

NOTE

In the old days sacrifices used to be offered to what the Lushais believed were the nymphs who were the goddesses of all wild beasts and young men it was thought, could, if they were lucky to find such a nymph, cause them to surrender to them in love, which would make the beasts of the jungle thereby more plentiful and give the lover more power over the animals.

REMEMBRANCE FOR POSTERITY

Do not fall in love with those beyond us. But to accept their advice and guidance is usually for our benefit.

ZAPHUNGA

In the old days there used to be constant fights between the Lushais and inhabitants of the Manipur State. On one occasion Vanhnuailiana, the great Lushai Chief, was leading an army against the village of Lampho and he was accompanied by some famous warriors, including such as Zabiaka, Pauia, Thatpua and Zaphunga.

In the ensuing battle it is true, many men were killed, but one incident, especially, is handed down from those days. At one house there were two Mirongs who stood their ground standing at the door and defying any to approach on pain of perishing at the point of the spear or by the blade of a large axe, this stout stand held up matters among the attackers who relied on surprise attacks and flank movements rather than on the more costly method of direct frontal attack.

But it was Zaphunga who grasped the situation and rallied his colleagues by asking them: "Dare you not now enter this house? Is it not this for which we have all come?"—and with these words he flung himself at the well protected house door. It is true he was struck, but the spear of the Mirong, as luck would have it, struck a fungki, or powder container, all beautifully worked in old lacquer, which he was carrying across his breast as a good soldier should. The Mirong, realising his spear

had not struck its mark, tried to escape, but Zaphunga cut him down. The remaining Mirong seeing the desperate position in which he had been placed, attempted to dash away, but he, poor fellow, was struck down by Zaphunga's own brother, who by this time had come up in front.

When the warriors returned home they were greatly feted and their sister Lalchhungi was very proud of them and gave it out that their fame would spread as being the braves who stormed the Mirong village.

REMEMBRANCE FOR POSTERITY

A coward can spoil an army while a brave man makes others brave and very often because he is brave he avoids death, which often comes to cowards earlier.

Let us all then strive to be braver than we are.

THINLANGA

Thinlanga was a wicked spirit of many years ago. He took the form of a cramped man, his body openly disclosing a spleen which he stuffed with green leaves. He was also an expert flute player, and he lived on a tree near the Kanghmun village.

One day three village girls came his way to gather firewood. They made a pact that the girl who could not carry her own wood load home would have no claim on the others. When they got ready one of the girls did get left behind because she could not get her load on to her back. So, hearing the man with the flute and not wishing to be left too far behind by the other girls, she called "Hi, you who play the flute, please come and help to get this load on to my back so that I can carry it home."

Thinlanga replied—"You will be too afraid of me if I come." The girl replied she would not be afraid at all. So Thinlanga replied: "All right, I will come down and help you, but remember, do not gaze at me!"

But as he came the girl could not resist just peeping at him out of the corner of her eye and, seeing his open spleen all stuffed with green leaves, she did actually become very frightened.

As soon as the firewood was safely loaded on her back

Thinlanga said to her : " Now remember, say nothing of what you may have seen or anything that has happened, or be sure I will come and kill you, for, remember ! I can enter by a very small hole."

When night came, and several young men came to pay court to the girl in her house, she could not contain her news and said that she had seen something dreadful. The young men were very eager for her to speak. So the girl said to them : " First close up all the small holes in the wall." As soon as this was done she commenced to tell them all she had seen. But no sooner had she finished than Thinlanga, who had been hiding outside, suddenly entered by a wide opening in the wall that they had all forgotten about in their search for the small holes and he straightway seized her with great strength and crashed her to the ground outside the house, so that even her head entered the hard ground and there he left her upside down, her skirts falling to the ground, thus bringing final shame upon her before all. Thinlanga then disappeared quickly back to his hiding place amid the tree branches.

REMEMBRANCE FOR POSTERITY

Keep matters to oneself, if heard in trust or confidence.

HMUICHUKCHURUDINI

There was once upon a time a young girl whose name was Nuchhimi whose parents thought the world of her. She was very good, industrious, and most reliable.

One day the parents of Nuchhimi killed a pig and as is custom they decided that they should send to Nuchhimi's aunt the thigh of the pig they had killed. The parents decided that it would be very nice if Nuchhimi and her sister took the thigh to their aunt. But Nuchhimi said she was frightened that she might lose her way, or take some wrong turning.

To this her mother said that the way to the aunt was clean, and clear while the way to the dangerous Hmuichukchurudini, of whom Nuchhimi was secretly frightened, would all be dirty and blocked by leaves and twigs. Unfortunately in some way Hmuichukchurudini

got to hear what Nuchhimi's mother had said. So she straightway closed up the proper way and cleared her way.

In due course Nuchhimi met Hmuichukchurudini at the branch of the two roads and, on asking her which was the way to her aunt's house, Hmuichukchurudini took charge of Nuchhimi and her sister, saying they had only one aunt and that she was her aunt.

When night came at Hmuichukchurudini's house they all settled down for bed. Hmuichukchurudini on the Khumpui¹ and the two sisters on the khumai² bed. But it so happened that Nuchhimi's sister had a sore on her head and as she fell asleep the Hmuichukchurudini, who had been waiting for this, started to suck this wound till the sister woke up with a fit of pain and surprise, shouting out—"Oh, Mother! Oh, Mother!" But Hmuichukchurudini was very cunning and, quietly retreating, just said gently—"Do not be anxious! My house, I am sorry to say, swarms with bugs."

But no sooner had Nuchhimi's sister fallen off to sleep again than Hmuichukchurudini started to suck again and in fact when the sister fell, too weak to know what was happening, the Hmuichukchurudini started to eat her very flesh.

In the morning Hmuichukchurudini told Nuchhimi to light up the fire and being an obedient child she lit the fire, but seeing the bones of her sister she wept silently. Hmuichukchurudini, seeing this, turned on her sharply and asked her if she was weeping, but Nuchhimi protested, saying she only had smoke in her eyes.

After breakfast, just before Hmuichukchurudini went out, she took Nuchhimi and put her away in a basket, which she tied up with string, intending, of course, to have another fine feast when she got in after a day of cultivating in the fields.

But fortune favoured little Nuchhimi, and it so happened that a little mouse came along and scented that Nuchhimi could not be in such a position of her own free will, so he decided to gnaw through the string, whereupon, of course, Nuchhimi wasted no time in getting out of the basket. She thanked the mouse with great charm and in a way

¹ Khumpui—inner and family bed. ² Khumai—outer bed, less private.

that only little Nuchhimi knew and then ran for her home and parents, to whom she told all.

The parents were more than ordinarily angry and at once set out to ensure a severe punishment for Hmuichukchurudini.

They entered her house, put an egg on the hearth, left a stinging hornet in her bed clothes, hid a poisonous snake in her bamboo flask (Tui um), cut the verandah posts till they were only just able to bear the weight of the superstructure, and tied a really fierce goat under the verandah. They then hurriedly left.

When Hmuichukchurudini came back to her house she was carrying a doe with young and shouted to Nuchhimi to let her in. But there was silence and Hmuichukchurudini thought, of course, Nuchhimi was still caught in the basket so she put down the doe, which at once fled. Now being angry, tired, and disappointed, Hmuichukchurudini pushed in the door, went to drink from her water flask, was bitten by the snake, whereon she ran to the hearth when the egg exploded in her face, so that she had to lie down in her bed, where she was badly stung by the hornet, which made her rush to the veranda, which at once gave way, throwing her straight at the furious goat, which then butted her to death.

REMEMBRANCE TO POSTERITY

Cruelty does not pay

It is interesting to note that these stories bring out the conception that the late Mr. N. E. Parry, I.C.S., formed of the Lushai moral code known as TLAWMNGAIHNA, about which he once wrote, that it encouraged the Lushai to be courteous, unselfish, courageous, and industrious, always ready to help others, even at considerable inconvenience to himself, and that he must try to surpass others in doing his ordinary daily tasks efficiently.

The machinery for sustaining Lushai Society and Community Life can best be further understood by an examination of the system of Lushai customs, which we attempt in the ensuing chapter.

CHAPTER IV

LUSHAI CUSTOMS SO FAR AS THEY CONCERN LEGAL AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

THE late Mr. N. E. Parry, of the Indian Civil Service, who was Superintendent of the Lushai Hills from 1925 to 1928, rendered a very important contribution to the Lushai people and the administration by compiling a *Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies*. This publication records in detail information which it is becoming increasingly difficult to come by, even so early as twelve years after its compilation. It is not necessary, for the purpose of this narrative, that such meticulous detail as is contained in the *Monograph* should be attempted here. Only the essential framework of Lushai customs, as far as it can help to contribute to the understanding of the problem discussed, seems necessary.

Much can be learned about the mind of a people by a study of their customs. They form a guide to an understanding of the fabric of the community life, obligations involved, premarital relationships, marriages, divorces, and separations, property and inheritance, and other matters relating to sex.

It is well to remember that these customs have ruled for years and years, observed through countless generations, and have been fashioned to meet the needs of a society for ever threatened from without by ruthless enemies and from within by the ravages of nature, coupled with the failures common to most mankind. An assessment of their conception and vitality should provide some clue to the genius of these people, a conception of their culture.

FABRIC OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE OBLIGATIONS INVOLVED

The varied and numerous clans of hill folk, who have been fused into the main LUSHEI clan and now known

as Lushais, have lived under the domination of the Sailo Chiefs for so long that ambition towards Chieftainship by a HNAMECHAWM, or commoner, has played very little part in the social life of the people. Chieftainship among the Lusheis, with very rare exception, was looked upon as the prerogative of the Sailo. Scope, however, existed for members of the HNAMECHAWM to aspire to important posts in the Chief's administration. Under these conditions society was composed of the HNAMECHAWM¹, governed by a Chief aided by officials of his choice, who included the Puithiam or priest, the Thirdeg or blacksmith, the TLANGAU or village crier, the SADAWT the Chief's personal priest aided by a friend of the Chief's known as TLAHPAWI, Ramhuals, the agricultural experts, who advised the Chief on questions of cultivation, and the UPAS, or Elders, who were the main administrative assistants to the Chief. Since Government took over the hills there has been an addition in the form of KHAWCHHIAR, or village writer, who deals with Government papers for the Chief and maintains the revenue books, vital statistics, and other such matters.

The Chief and his UPAS had powers limited only by the temper of the people they ruled. Until they overstepped the mark the people had no other course open than to submit; for if villagers did try to escape from one Chief to another they risked their lives in the process and might easily lose their lives at the hands of the very Chief they sought in refuge. The Chief realised a pig or other appropriate tribute from the losing party in each dispute and would take steps to see that any award made by him and his elders were enforced. Disobedience of the Chief's orders might entail the seizure of the miscreant's complete property.

The major unit of payment was a SIAL, or Mithan,² a kind of bison, while pig, fowls, or eggs, sufficed for smaller dues.

To satisfy hot-headed sons the Chiefs were in the habit of sending them out to command outpost settlements, the aim of all Chiefs being to exercise dominion over

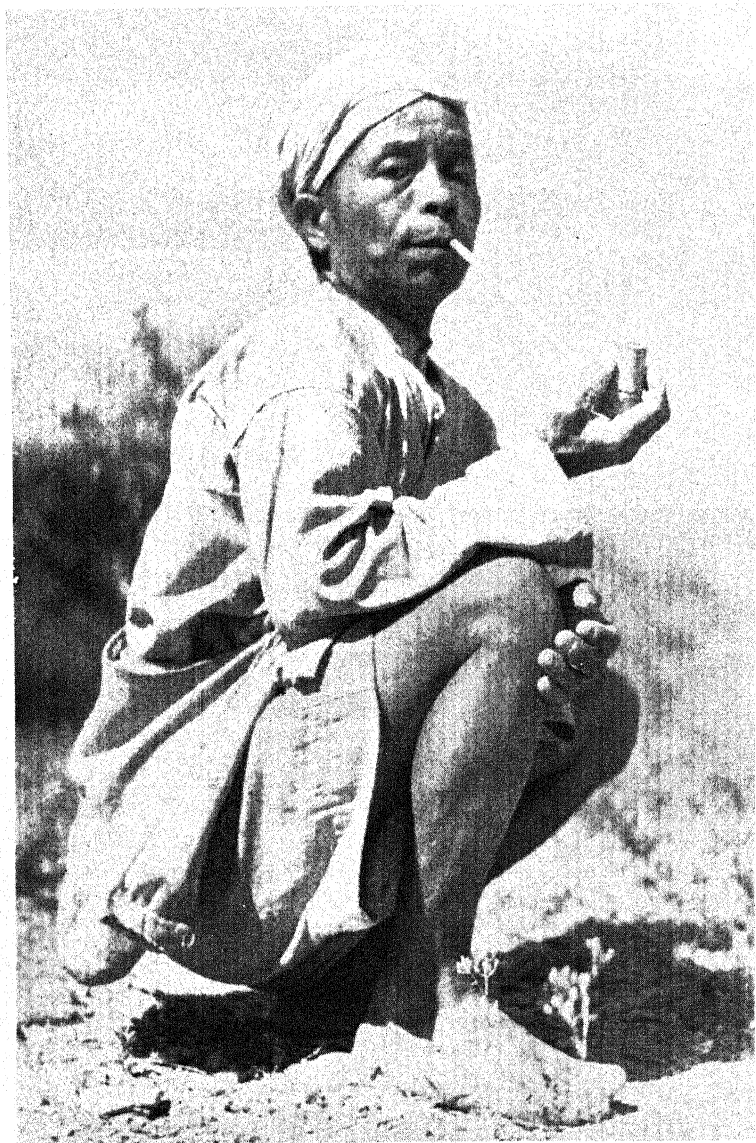
¹ MITHAN GAVEOUS FRONTALIS, p. 112.

² HNAMECHAWM—Commoners, p. 111.



THE LUSHAI MOTHER

greatly admired by the well-known artist SARAH ADAMS, wife of Mr. G. D. WALKER, M.B.E., Indian Civil Service, Commissioner of Divisions, Assam.



"THE SAME TO YOU"

sufficient land to accommodate their eldest and successive sons, the youngest falling heir to his father's stronghold.

To sustain this society security was paramount. This was partly achieved by the principle of the Zawlbuk, the young man's barrack near the Chief's house, situated usually in the centre of the village, while the whole village was fenced and strengthened by bamboo staves to prevent easy entry at night. All the unmarried men slept in the Zawlbuk and were there collected in one place, ready at a moment's call in the case of attack by enemies or the presence in the vicinity of wild animals or any other danger.

The Zawlbuk was run on a system not unlike that in, vogue in public Schools, in that Monitors were appointed, who disciplined the young from the time they first joined, not long after they were weaned, but when they were considered too old to sleep at home. Then came the stage when on examination it was found that one of the youth's pubic hairs would meet round the stem of a Lushai bamboo pipe, when he would be accorded the status of youngman or TLANGVAL, and so he would progress till he could hope to aspire to a Monitorship. There were usually four such Monitors, each entrusted to watch over the four quarters of the village layout. The Monitors had the right of punishment in the case of failure to perform the common daily tasks of collecting wood, storing water, or meeting calls for assistance to the public.

The ZAWLBUK would brook no interference from meddling parents and those who acted with indiscretion were subject to revenge, which might take the form of mere frightening by all the ZAWLBUK inmates shaking the offender's house till it seemed about to fall or, when tempers were running high, the offender might even be soundly beaten. As there was usually right, by custom, on the side of the ZAWLBUK, the Chiefs rarely interfered with this kind of action. The Chief was the only man who might, with impunity, throw stones on to the roof of the ZAWLBUK house to stop down annoying chatter.

A system of community obligation existed under the term TLAWMNGHAIHNA, implying public service. Crops of the sick would be tended by the strong, the Chief's lands would

be weeded as a mark of support, help would be given to rebuild houses accidentally burned down, warriors would volunteer when asked for, hunters would strive to be energetic in the chase, and, in general, the good citizen was he who was foremost in meeting calls that were really necessary for the good of the whole village. In return for this such braves were always rewarded by public acclaim and they would often be invited to share select feasts held by the Chief in his own house.

Money was naturally very rare, the village economy being based on cattle and crops and the number of family members. While kinship was strong, individual proprietyship was definite, though each would help the others without thought for any repayment beyond help at some future time, when, perhaps, the donor himself might fall upon evil days. With very minor exceptions women could not possess property. Owing to the fact that settlements were large and isolated the need for communal strength imposed an obligation upon all. There was no recognised system by which a commoner could raise himself to the status of Chieftainship through industry. Munificence in public feasts, as well as general bravery, could, with the help of sacrifices, earn distinction and some few privileges.

The Chief was materially supported by a recognised measure of tribute in paddy from all the HNAMCHAWM who also paid dues to the blacksmith, priest, and crier, in addition to the dues involved in the loss of a dispute. The Chief also received the left foreleg of every animal killed in the hunt, and the blacksmith received the spine and three ribs !

A common defect among many Chiefs was their unbridled greed, and valuable gongs, animals, necklaces, beads, and other treasures, often found their way to the Chief's house by shameless distraint. This was such a factor in the lives of the people that, to this day, the urge for possessions is not common, added to which, in more recent years, the traditional love of migration has had greater scope. Migration and the patient building up of wealth do not go hand in hand and this factor is of paramount importance in the approach to modern Lushai.

PREMARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

Sexual intercourse between unmarried women and married or unmarried men among the commoners, has all along been provided for by indigenous custom ; Chiefs usually kept a tighter rein on their daughters. But public opinion, in the main, seems to have said : " If you cannot be good be careful ". Within certain exceptions the only danger of these *affaires* was that there might be an illegitimate child, in which case the seducer had to meet a charge, of £3, payable to the father of the girl. The father, however, would probably be enraged at the commercial value of his daughter being severely reduced and at her chances of a profitable marriage being dashed. The seducer is entitled to keep the illegitimate child, which the mother has to make over when the child has been weaned and is about 3 years of age. Even if the seducer is a married man, his wife has no redress on the grounds of his adultery. This unusual tolerance represents one of the few really cankerous privileges among Lushai men in a country and a society which is very definitely fashioned for men. If the woman is so indiscreet as to have a second child by her lover, which is not infrequently the case, she is deprived of all redress, though for a third such child by the same man she can again claim the customary £3.

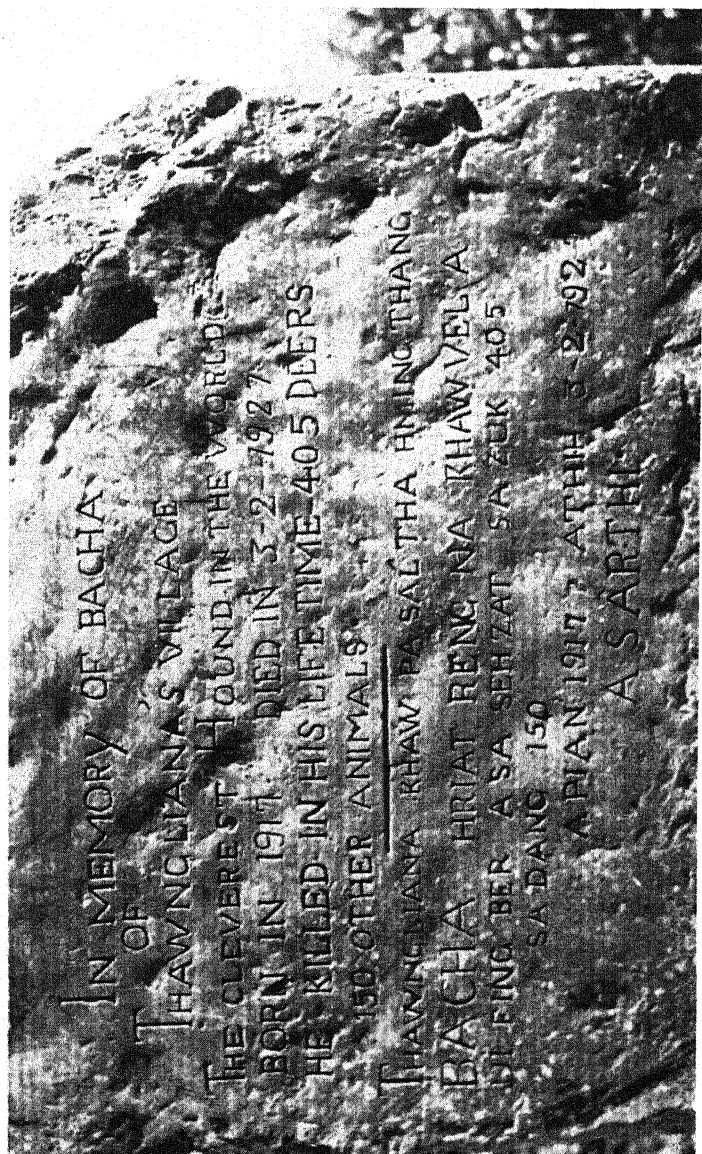
The process of courting is, however, natural and has much simple charm. A young man will set out to pay court to the girl of his choice as she sits on the verandah toying with cotton or feeding the pigs and, if relations are happy, the two will make an arrangement that they will hunt in couples as much as they can when engaged on wood cutting work, cultivation, or such like occupations. This association affords the girl the opportunity of summing up her young man and if the assessment is, on the whole, satisfactory, she may well yield to him from time to time. Clandestine visits are planned and the girl will get the better of her unsuspecting parents by perhaps leaving open a door or a window near her sleeping couch so that her lover can smuggle himself, under cover of darkness, into the warm caresses of his expectant lover. But there is one danger he has to watch and that is that he is not caught

by the parents. If he is, he will have to pay a fine valued at about fifteen shillings or agree to marry this erring daughter of irate parents. This custom often leads to great complications.

A young man may be out for only a bit of fun and, under present day conditions, he may dash out from the house into the darkness, shorts and shirt in hand, regardless of honour or dignity, hoping thereby to establish an alibi and to shake off unpleasant complications. Perhaps the girl may be mercenary and may suspect her young man to be too slow in coming forward with full marriage proposals and may accordingly seek to trap him. But this is a dangerous game for her to play because, on seizure by the parent, he may agree to pay the fine to be quit of such a dangerous vixen and, in such a case, she in her turn would acquire such a bad reputation among the eligible young men that things might go disastrously against her in the future. On the other hand, in the case of a very earnest and perhaps well thought of lover, the parents may allow the spreading out of a sleeping cloth in their house, which is tantamount to recognising that the couple may lose themselves in each other without sense of restriction. But if the young man later changes his mind he is inescapably bound to meet the customary fine of £3.

In any case any anger that the parents may feel towards any young man found with their daughter in their house does not arise from the sexual significance of the association as between the lad and his girl, but rather from the fact that the couple have defiled the parents' own sleeping couch unbeknown to them. All the family sleep on the KHUMPUI, or BIG BED, and in the case of the elder girls, when the family has increased greatly, they sleep on the floor near the KHUMPUI, so that a young man lying with such a girl is considered, in effect, to have been so brazen as to have abused the KHUMPUI.

The path of love, however, is not always free from dangerous implications and to guard against misunderstandings young men often court their girl friends, taking with them a young boy called a PUARAK, whose duty it is to act as go-between for appointments and trysts and to see



IN MEMORY OF BACHA

OF

THAWNG LIANA'S VILLAGE

THE CLEVEREST FOUND IN THE WORLD

BORN IN 1914 DIED IN 3-2-1927

HE KILLED IN HIS LIFE TIME 405 DEERS

150 OTHER ANIMALS

THAWNG LIANA KHAW PA SAL THA HNING THANG

BACHA HRIAT RENG NA KHAW VELA

DI FENG BER A SA SEHZAT SA ZUK 405

SA DANG 150

A PIAN 1917 7 APRIL 3-2-1927

A SARTH

MEMORIAL TO A HUNTING DOG



"HIS BIG, BIG WORLD"

the couple having intercourse without, however, making himself a nuisance. The underlying idea here is that the young gallant can later produce proof that he has seduced his girl if at any time the secret gets out and his claim to have had sexual intercourse with her is held in dispute. Should a man assert that he has had such intercourse and yet cannot prove it, the girl may claim £3 fine for defamation against him. This not infrequently occurs for, if a courtship breaks down, there are always apt to be recriminations. Moreover, a girl may try to quell mischief talk about her "goings on" with her lover by bringing a defamation case against him. He must guard himself against this danger as best he can and so the PUARAK system applies, without which he could not expect to substantiate his achievements.

It is always open to the father of an illegitimate child to marry the mother, in which case the fine is halved at thirty shillings, which goes to the mother herself and forms no part of the marriage price which the father has to pay to the mother's parents. In practice, of course, all the money paid goes to the mother's parents.

Young Lushai girls are by no means unconcerned in the matter of comparative skill in the love technique possessed by the young married men, but these latter have to beware they do not get snared into having to meet a £3 fine to avoid marrying the girl as a result of a claim by the gold digger type that she only yielded as the married man promised to take her for his wife. In the case of unmarried men no claim based on a broken promise of marriage can lie, the significance here being that while Lushai stands for natural relations between young men and women, she does not stand for commercialised vice.

MARRIAGE

The step from courtship to marriage demands of the man that he should seek the consent of the parents to marry their daughter. Two considerations then arise, namely, the willingness of the daughter and the price which the suitor or his family is agreeable to pay as the girl's marriage price. If these two matters are satisfactorily settled the wedding day is soon fixed. Feasts are prepared and on

the day fixed intermediaries precede the bride on behalf of the young groom and make over the agreed portion of the price to the girl's parents. It is these intermediaries who are the chief witnesses on behalf of the husband, if any dispute about the price ever arises at some later date. As marriage prices are rarely paid early and often remain unpaid for as long as twenty years or more, these intermediaries constitute a very important link.

The husband will not cohabit with his bride on the actual day of the wedding, though the bride will have to suffer the ordeal of being led by friends, male and female, to her husband's house on the wedding day and on the way teased by being pelted with rice, earth, stones, and much else. But she will return to her father's house that night, after enjoying the feasts, joining her husband for good the following day. When she leaves her father's house she will leave amid tears and anguish as a token of the gap she will leave in her home, though of course her parents would be more unhappy if she never found a good husband.

Before dealing with the details of the marriage price, less confusion will arise if it be understood at the outset that the price constitutes a security or reciprocal price and not a mere sale price. Unless the customs are looked at in detail and as a whole, misrepresentation on this point becomes easily possible. The underlying reciprocity in the Lushai code in itself gives the direct lie to those who would assert, presumably in ignorance, that Lushai marriage prices involve a sense of traffic in woman.

The price is made up of a main price and subsidiary prices which, except in the case of Chiefs, have now been arbitrarily fixed for legal clarity. Prices paid in excess of this legal maximum are irrecoverable through the Courts. The main price amounts to four Mithans, or a sum of about £6 if the bride has no dowry, or five Mithans or £7 10s. if she has a dowry, irrespective of the value of the latter. The subsidiary prices are a little complicated, but dispose of the suggestion, if ever made, that Lushai women are merely sold. These prices are given below :—

SUMHMAHRUAI MAN. £1 10s.

This means literally the "Leader of the first prices".

It is the first money paid to a bride's father and is usually paid on the marriage day. No obligation is imposed on the father to spend this sum on receipt. It is rather expected to be treated as a Capital Asset for the satisfaction of some obligation.

PUSUM MAN. NINE Shillings.

This means the price payable to the Pu, or bride's mother's father, or her mother's brother if the former has died.

This payment encourages the grandparents to maintain a vigilant interest in their female grandchildren.

PALAL MAN. SEVEN Shillings and sixpence.

This is a reward for the leading of the bride from her parents house to the house of the husband.

NI ARMAN. THREE Shillings.

The cost of a fowl for the sister of the bride's father, or in other words, the bride's paternal Aunt. The importance given to her on the wedding day helps this lady to keep a watchful and interested eye over her niece.

NAU PUAK PUAN. THREE Shillings.

This means the "cloth in which the child was carried" and is symbolic of the days when the bride was carried in a cloth on the back of the bride's elder sister, who on this occasion enjoys the price. This assists an elder sister, who may have married into another family, to revive her interest in her blood sister who is about to go ever further away by joining another family. There are other optional prices which need not be described as they are not universal. The maximum price in the aggregate, therefore, amounts to about £9 4s. 6d., if the bride has no dowry, but to £10 11s. 6d. if she has one.

This account, however, discloses clearly that the underlying spirit of the payments is the consolidation of family ties.

It sometimes happens that the mother of the bride is

no longer a member of the family, due to her remarriage or her adultery, in which case the mother is specifically due six shillings out of the main price on her daughter's wedding day, even if the daughter had been illegitimate, and this is not payable to anyone else if the mother happens to have died. The only time this price is not paid is if the daughter was literally a bastard, the mother having then originally enjoyed the full penalty money of £3.

More enlightened, and perhaps more wealthy, parents can make much of their daughter by providing her with a specially lavish dowry and with a rich trousseau, which, in any case, must include a thick white cotton blanket rug, usually made up in tufts of unspun cotton, and a basket for keeping her possessions. If the woman arrives in her husband's house without these articles and only comes by them by her own hand in her husband's house the husband can claim a reduction of his marriage price obligations of £1 10s.

Besides this regular kind of marriage other kinds also take place for a variety of reasons. A young man sometimes is forced by circumstances or his own ardour or foolishness to "hang up his hat" in the house of his bride's parents, but to discourage this departure from the conventions the bride's parents have to submit to a reduction of £1 10s. from the fixed price on the marriage of their daughter.

Conversely, when a girl is accepted out of hand in this way into the house of her lover's parents, the husband has to pay £1 10s. in addition to the usual fixed marriage price.

Parties have eloped before now. If, or when, the matter is subsequently regularised, the price of the bride is enhanced by £1 10s. to discourage such boldness and defiance among young lovers.

The daughters of widows sometimes fall into alliances widely outside custom, as no living father would willingly rest if his daughter displayed such a lack of wisdom. These are cases in which a girl will marry a man without any price on agreeing that they can separate or divorce at will without any obligation on either side. Such a girl nearly always ends up in a state of dire discredit.

A widow will sometimes fall a prey to the approach of

a poor but plausible young man, who may press to be allowed to marry her daughter free of all price and obligation in return for coming to live with his mother-in-law, in order to support her in her own house. If the young man later "walks out", neither the mother-in-law nor his wife can substantiate any claim against him.

There remains the poor but honest young man who falls desperately in love with the bride of his choice, but he simply has not the money or property to make any payment, nor has any to help him to do so. The parents may accept a solemn undertaking, publicly made, that the groom promises to make over at the very first possible opportunity £1 10s. or £3. If his wife dies before he has done this he can never evade this due, whether she had borne him any children or not.

Sometimes there are last-minute scandals in the best-regulated families. Another young man may be pressing his case and at the very last moment he may succeed in winning the bride elect for himself, when all arrangements in connection with the girl's first betrothed have then to be called off. If the new suitor ultimately changes his mind he is liable to a fine of £3, as he has "broken the rope by which the mithan was actually tied", implying that the bride was about to be possessed.

If a married man persuades a girl to agree to marry him and, to please her, a man divorces his wife, the girl must pay a fine of £3 if she fails to marry him after all. The £3 would be used by the man for payment to his wife's parents as compensation for the insult to his wife and for the purpose of asking her parents to allow him to take her back once again to his home.

There is a curious custom worth noting before proceeding on to consider the matter of property in the Lushai Hills. If a man chooses a younger before an elder of two or more sisters he has to meet an enhancement in the marriage price, due above the normal, of a sum of £1 10s. as a gesture of face saving on behalf of the elder unmarried sisters.

Polygamy is indigenous to the country, but nowadays, in practice, it is less common because the wives quarrel too much. A husband will often take a second wife, if his

first one is very old and he is still virile, but in these cases the elder one knows on which side her bread is buttered and if the young wife is not too saucy or objectionable—relations can settle down to a working cordiality. The interdependability and utility of a liaison generally play a more real part than cultured affection, an affection which can inspire such a devotion that a man “cannot love his wife so much, did he not love honour more”. A polygamous wife is a concubine and is known as a HMEI, but for all practical purposes of price, custom, and treatment she is treated in just the same way as a first wife.

PROPERTY

Property is so interconnected with the marriage relationship and its cleavage that it is advisable, at this stage, before examining divorces and separations, to present some picture of the property question, in so far as it applies to ownership of property by women.

Generally speaking, custom has not sanctioned ownership of property by women, except on very special and limited account. A woman may possess a dowry on marriage to any value, though its legal significance cannot exceed £1 10s. A woman bereft of all male relations, who does not wish to adopt any other, may enjoy customary marriage dues or associated claims on her own account. The product of a woman's labour in her husband's house accrues to the husband by custom and not to the wife.

When a woman marries a man she will ordinarily take a dowry and will be in possession of a woman's customary possessions, such as baskets, cloths to wear, PUANS as they are called, some used when a maiden, others for use later. She will have the weaving loom—probably the one on which she laboured so industriously to make up colourful cloths in the days when she awaited her choice by some young man. After her marriage she is unlikely to take anything like the same care over her cloths, nor will she spend the same time on “make up”. She will also bring with her the large cotton rug blanket for the nuptial bed and she should also bring with her the cloth in which it will be her duty, one day, to bury her husband.

The dowry should not ordinarily be less than one necklace of thick heavy amber beads, valued in Lushai at between £2 and £5. The bride will also hope to be possessed of some dark blue cotton in the skein, known as THING DUANG. Some of this will have been dyed in vegetable dye over twenty years before, yet never once made up, always being kept and preserved as an heirloom.

These possessions are very different from the sapphire rings and silken foam associated with western marriages, but their significance is considerable, as in the case of the THING DUANG mentioned above. The cotton skein is originally white, but is boiled in a local potash solution for forty-eight hours. In a separate pot about twenty-nine pounds of leaves from the ACANTHACEAE tree are heated to below boiling point in three operations, each set of leaves being squeezed out into a special pot to make a blue water solution. Into this solution is placed the white cotton skein, now well saturated with potash, and it is left for ten minutes, after which it is dried in the sun and this completes the initiation of the treasured THING DUANG. Re-dyeings continue several times a year, even up to thirty or more times over a long period in the owner's search for fastness. A well-dyed skein is deeply valued and a bride will never like to use such a skein until she feels justified by the importance of the demand. A young mother will happily labour away preparing blue skeins for her young baby daughter so that her child shall be possessed of these treasures when, in the days long ahead, she will be led to the house of her groom. Many daughters feel in these mothers' gifts to them that they are, in fact, a real part of their own mothers.

The possession of this THUAM, or dowry, entitles the bride's father to raise the marriage price from £9 4s. 6d. up to £10 11s. 6d. This Thuam is the woman's own property and is only in the disposition of the husband if the couple fall on really hard days and the wife agrees to its realisation to keep body and soul together.

If a woman dies her male relations can claim back her THUAM if they agree to reduce any outstanding marriage dues by a sum of £1 10s., the legal value of the Thuam.

If all dues, except the last £1 10s., known in Lushai as THUTPHAH, have been paid up, the dowry may not be claimed if a demand is made for the THUTPHAH. This THUTPHAH was always intended to be left unpaid with the husband, in case the wife, in her advanced old age, ever fell upon evil days, in which case, it would be she to whom the THUTPHAH or last £1 10s. would be paid to alleviate her distress.

DIVORCES AND SEPARATIONS

In the sense that relationship between husband and wife, or wives, is greatly one of interdependency, it is not difficult to realise that the ability of a wife to produce children for her husband has a very definite bearing on her value. This value plays a vital part in negotiations consequent upon divorce or separation. If a woman has borne her husband a child she is known as THISEN PAL¹ and if she has not delivered a formed child she is THISENPALLO.² The line is only drawn at a child born without hands or feet, in which case it is not recognised as a human child and the woman would be considered THISENPALLO.

There are several primary ways of separating and certain recognised grounds for separating.

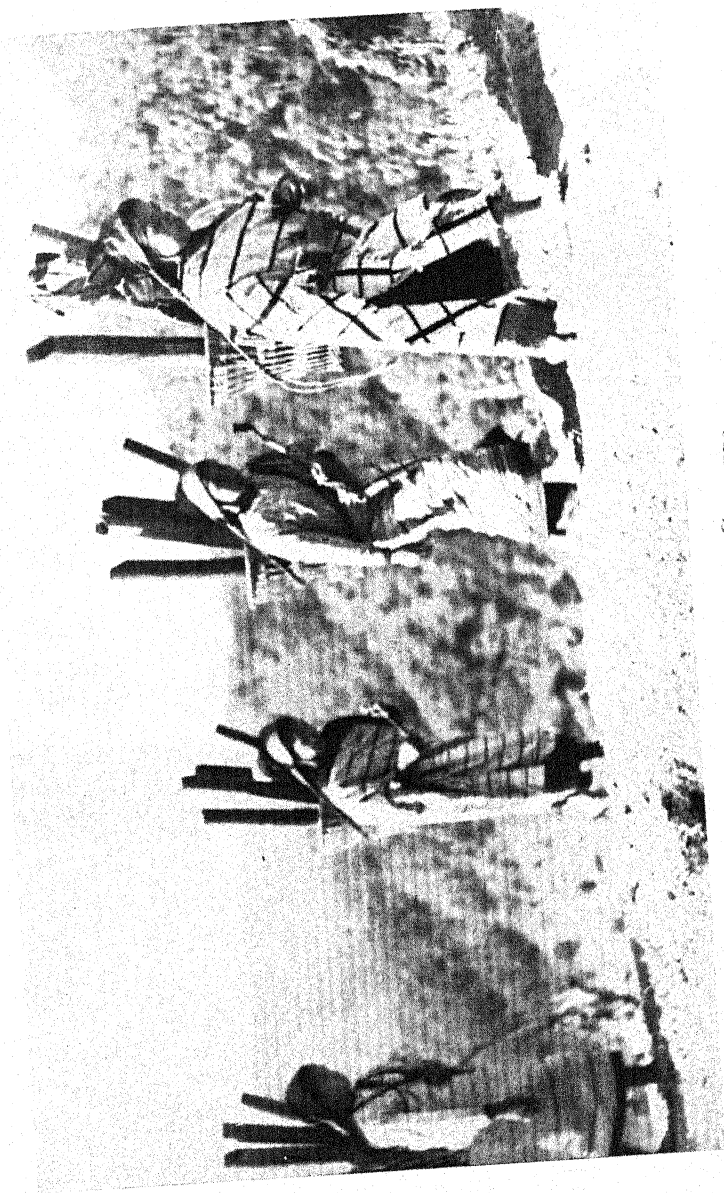
A man may divorce his wife by the simple statement : "I divorce you". In this case, if the woman was THISENPAL, he has to pay to her family the total marriage dues to complete to the settled figure, including the THUTPHAH or last £1 10s. mentioned in the previous section. If the woman was Thisenpallo her parents are not entitled to claim anything more than what they had already received, the woman being allowed by custom to retain her THUAM.³

A woman may divorce her husband by merely "walking out on him", in which case she is known as having left him SUM CHHUAH, which literally means that she gives up all price. The effect of this is that the parents, who have received her price in part or in whole, have to disgorge it in favour of the husband. The woman is, however, entitled

¹ THISEN (Blood) PAL : To bear a child.

² THISENPALLO : Not to bear a child.

³ DOWRY in her own right.



LUSHAI WATER CARRIERS



LUSHAI SCHOOL GIRLS AT PLAY

The children play Sapnu Uri Lur, which means that moles are entering into the house through the special opening left for the house dog.

by custom to retain her THUAM and actual personal property acquired before she joined her husband's household.

If the implications of these two methods of separations are pondered the reader will not be slow to grasp that there is a temptation for the wife to make herself such a nuisance that she shall invite divorce which will be no pecuniary loss to her parents, while the husband is tempted to ill-treat a wife that she may leave him SUMCHUAH, or at no pecuniary loss to him. This situation provides one of the chief lines of litigation in the Lushai Hills.

Then there is divorce by agreement under the terms SUMLAITAN or PEKSACHANG, the only difference lying in the financial accommodation. In the former, parties halve the original liabilities while, in the latter, the liabilities at the time of separation are assessed between the two houses by mutual agreement.

Various established grounds for divorce include divorce on account of madness, abandonment of a wife, impotency on the man's part, or infirmity on the woman's, while finally there is adultery in its direct sense as well as in the customary Lushai sense.

In the case of madness each must look after the other, according as to whether it is the husband or wife who is mad, for a period of three years. If there is failure in this obligation the party is held liable as to the price customs. If the same party discharges the responsibility, separation is permitted on a basis of PEKSACHANG.

If a man is known to have abandoned his wife she will fall heir to the fields and property in her own right, and on return of the husband can accept or reject him in her wish.

In the case of impotency in a husband the ordinary custom is for a watcher to be chosen, accompanied by a responsible member of the wife's family, when direct evidence can be made available as to the man's ability to play his part. If a man survives such an ordeal he must not be one to be despised! In some cases the District Medical Officer comes into the picture, as occurred in the case of a wife staying in Burma, on the grounds that her husband, living in Lushai, had been impotent. The man was found fully competent and the wife's family was involved in a considerable

payment, £3 alone being on the ground that she defamed him by her unsubstantiated claims.

Adultery by Lushai custom is possible when a woman's husband is alive or even when he is dead. The penalty for adultery during her husband's lifetime is the return of all the price paid for her and the eviction of the erring wife, even her treasured THUAM becoming the property of her husband. The circumstances by which a woman can commit adultery after her husband's death are various. For three months after the death the wife must remain in her husband's house, during which time she has to put out food to help him on his way to the MI THI KHUA or dead man's village. If she has sexual intercourse during this time she is considered to have committed adultery in the same way as though her husband had been alive and is subject to exactly the same penalties. If a widow has sexual intercourse before she has performed a ceremony known as THLAHUAL she will be considered as having committed unmitigated adultery and is subject to full penalties.¹

Until she remarries, if she has sexual intercourse with a man, she is considered to have committed adultery and is liable in varying degrees, according as to the circumstances of the case, the time that has elapsed since her husband's death, and many other contingencies too long and meticulous to find a place here without tiring the reader.

Any man married or unmarried involved in adultery with an unmarried or married woman is free of any liability. In olden days a man knew it was wrong to have sexual intercourse with another's wife, even though society exacted no specific penalty. Unless he confessed his evil act to a dog, animal, or perhaps some trusted human, he would be obsessed by the idea that he would surely be savaged by a tiger, leopard, bear, or some wild animal. This ritual must have given him some relief on the lines of the system of the more modern group movement, the Oxford group, part of whose activities include confessions and the unburdening of the soul before others. In the case of

¹ It was on this custom that the case of the "sophisticated teacher who sought to profit by the ignorance of others," in Chapter VI, was based.

unmarried women or widows no such feelings are felt. In the old days Lushai believed that a man who had been unsuccessful in seducing his quota of young Lushai belles would be peppered by one, Pawla, near the entrance to the village of the dead men. The effect of these shots from Pawla's catapults would be to raise a sore in the man's ribs, which would give him acute discomfort for at least three years while in the dead men's village. To some extent this suggests one explanation for the habit of young Lushai men, which English Officers find so odious, of proclaiming from the house tops any success they may have had with a Lushai belle. It may be remembered that no specific penalty by custom attaches to a man for sexual intercourse with a married or unmarried woman, so that in this publicity he is quite safe himself, but his bravado and pride before others means more to him than his romance with the girl who yielded to him and who must face public shame.

Before a separation or divorce is considered final, allowance is made for human nature in an arrangement whereby a husband may always go to call back his wife from her parents' house, offering some appeasement to her relatives. In bad cases a considerable due is demanded by the wife's relatives as evidence of good faith on the part of the husband for the future and this sum is called FANGHMA No Er and, when payable, is not considered as part of the ordinary marriage price. The term means the "eating of a cucumber", a term implying finality, that it is as irrecoverable as is a cucumber once consumed !

There are customs to cover other various matters of a sexual nature.

Women can be concerned in rape, attempts to outrage their modesty, or, in the case of known prostitutes in the old days, compelled to submit to being ravished collectively. Rape is extremely rare as conditions are usually too free to give rise to the temptation. If there is a rape case, only the Superintendent could take the case, under present day conditions. Young men, however, gate-crash into others' houses at night and try to get some girl of their fancy, but without any previous approach, to accept their advances. On a girl showing them up in her wrath they are liable

to a fine of £1 10s. for their mere presence on such a venture. In the old days a lady whose virtue was known to be elastic might be set upon by some of the lads of the village, claiming sanction to use her as they wished. Such cases could hardly occur now and would be considered as rape of the worst kind. Sodomy is very rare and incest traditionally hated for the fear of the effects on village crops.

A fine of £3 is customary for a man who tries to have sexual intercourse with a girl below age. Penalties exist for men who take liberties with married or unmarried women. A man who gets fresh with a married woman and touches her breasts is fined £1 10s. straight away, if she complains. Only if he is a known roué might he be fined twelve or fifteen shillings, where he fondles the breasts of an unmarried girl. If he did so in an honest attempt to seek the potentialities of his advances it is unlikely he would be fined at all, as it is by this approach young Lushai men gauge how near their next step may be in this game of centuries.

If a man is found opening up a skirt which a woman may have folded up and put away he is likely to be fined £1 10s. at least. Such behaviour is considered most undesirable.

Provision is made for a certain but uncommon type of Lushai lad, the man who impersonates a husband he knows to be with a drinking party. This man, under cover of the universal darkness, except for perhaps a glowing cinder or two in the main hearth, will seek a married woman's bed and have sexual intercourse with her. If she detects him she is shamed if she speaks. But yet if she detects him and can establish the guilt this is a case in which the husband can make a claim against this social menace. The victim would have to pay the whole of the woman's marriage prices to the injured husband, the Lushai idea here being that the husband could then afford to divorce the unfortunate wife by paying over her price in full to her parents which would preserve him from any financial loss, and her from the wrath of her family.

Lushai Society makes provision for the case of the woman who has left her husband on some ground or other while

carrying his child, but who has sexual intercourse with yet another man. If she is detected she is fined £3 for fouling another's nest and she may even be left with the child as well, in which case it would be a true bastard to be brought up by the woman only. Such cases are rare but occur at intervals.

A woman's family still retains responsibilities for her even after she is married. For instance, if a woman is concerned in any sexual trouble it is not the husband who has to meet any liabilities but the woman's own nearest male relation. If, for instance, some one attempts to outrage her modesty or defames her on account of some alleged sexual delinquency, it is left to her nearest male relation to defend her and if this is done successfully the fine involved is paid to her family and not to the husband. This is a sound and salutary custom and imposes on a woman's family the need for ensuring she retains her chastity.

On the other hand, if a woman is guilty of some delinquency other than one of a sexual nature, such as defaming a neighbour over a theft or concern in a cattle death, the husband has to accept the liability, but he also enjoys the fine if she is vindicated and awarded any customary compensation.

INHERITANCE

The laws of Lushai inheritance are based on specific principles which, if mastered, can generally be applied to the satisfaction of public opinion, though perhaps not always of the contending parties, in even the most complicated of many varying circumstances.

The youngest son is the heir to a father's property, a legitimate son ranking prior to a HMEI, or son of a concubine, who in turn ranks prior to an illegitimate offspring. The reason the youngest son inherits is that it is anticipated it will be this one who will look after his parents in their old age, long after the others are fledged and on their own. Usually, however, in practice all the brothers share but the youngest always inherits a major share.

But there can be no inheritance without acceptance of any or all the liabilities involved. Claims frequently are made to inherit property but the same fervour is rarely noticeable in the matter of accepting the accompanying liabilities !

Failing a son, the heir is the nearest male relation to the deceased, the father, or a brother. Provision exists to guard against designing people persuading the old to accept them as adopted sons, promising that they will nourish and look after the old people in return for an undertaking that they will inherit the old people's property on their death. Such a situation is rarely possible because a necessary preliminary would be litigation for the purpose of establishing that the old man's near relations had declined ever to nourish or look after him. If he could not show this he would be unable to establish that they had abandoned him and without establishing this it would be contrary to custom for him to attempt to vest any right to the family property, after his death, in one who was an outsider. Attempts are frequently made but, unless there is publicity, there can be no relationship severance, which is an essential preliminary to property inheritance ! Where there is publicity the matter is usually clarified and the snare duly exposed.

A man may dispose of property within his own right during his lifetime but he may not make a will disposing of this outside recognised laws and customs. It is always open to a man to disinherit a son on valid grounds such as the son refusing to look after him when his circumstances demanded such help. If a son abandons his father the latter can claim the return of specific endowments made, like the price of a gun or the price of a wife.

The nearest male to a man on his father's side is his customary heir, where he has no son. It is the male side which, having paid for a woman, inherits. Only in very exceptional cases can a woman, for whom marriage price has been paid by the husband's family to the wife's family, inherit property in her own right. She may administer a property on behalf of her sons, but if they can establish that she is frittering away the whole estate they can claim

to inherit the property by immediate division. Any who so inherits, or inherits on any account, must nourish the women who were dependant upon the deceased. If a man died literally with no male connections his property could be inherited by his daughter or failing a daughter his widow.

The customary law of inheritance cannot be evaded by a wise heir who visualises that his liabilities under the inheritance will greatly outweigh the assets. The heir is liable by customary law and must face up to all claims. Neither can an heir be superseded on the grounds of absence in a far country, though the share in such a case might be limited to two-thirds or so of any customary due, if another had performed in fact all that should normally have been expected of the real heir.

MISCELLANEOUS

Before touching on the form that, by custom, ceremonies would take, it is necessary to fill in the background of Lushai custom by a brief reference to customs not covered by the preceding paragraphs.

Assaults are rare but punishable ; if more than nose bleeding results, a fine up to £3 may be inflicted in serious cases. If a wife, who has been beaten by her husband, flees to another's house she must be given protection and custom permits the householder to resist to the limit the pursuer, subject to the exercise of no more force than is necessary to hold him. Assaults between children are recognised as inevitable and no fines are leviable unless the parents foolishly interfere. Forcible entry of a man's house is forbidden and if in addition an intruder were to assault or harm any of the inmates of the house he would be fined £3. Murder or death cases are triable by the Headquarters Courts.

Theft is looked upon as a very serious crime. Moreover, cases are definitely rare. Paddy, umbrellas, tools are all frequently left on the main paths but a case is hardly ever heard when a passer-by takes such an article for his own advantage. Punishment ranges from 15s. to £3. A

habitual thief would have difficulty in remaining permanently in any typical Lushai village. Theft of cattle can be punishable up to £6, if a Mithan is stolen for the specific purpose of consuming it.

In the same sense eavesdropping is considered a very disgraceful offence and is now punishable by a fine of £3 and the culpable parties are lucky to escape an earlier retribution in the form of a strong spear thrust. There is one amusing exception on nights when the groom and his bride are together for the first time when it is in accordance with age-long custom for friends of the parties to lie about near the nuptial enclosure and to keep up a running commentary on the proceedings all through the night !

Defamation is a common cause of litigation. The Lushai seems to have a real genius for mischief. Mischievous statements incapable of substantiation involve a fine of £3 and are more frequent than is healthy for any sound society.

Accidental deaths or damage in fights between domestic cattle involve no penalties. To kill a dog in a jhum house of another is to court the height of ill luck, a fine of £3 being always demanded, which is the same if crabs are cooked in another's jhum house. Anyone maiming private cattle is subject to a fine varying from 15s. to £3, the corpse being eaten by the claimant or the judgment debtor in varying circumstances.

Hunting dogs are the pride of a real Lushai's heart and are much more highly valued and loved than any other kind of dog. If such a dog is killed in the hunt no claim may lie. If the hunt is successful the real Lushai hunter will give the dog one of the legs of the kill for his share in the contest.

Only death, not injury, at the hands of a domestic animal is recognised or culpable to some degree, unless the victim was known to have been careless or provocative. If the victim was without blame the owner must make up to the deceased's family by performing a full funeral ceremony, the offending animal being killed, and a burial cloth provided.

Damage to crops by animals is not admissible as any



ASPIRATION



HAND GINNING

ground for claims, the underlying principle being that an owner of cultivation or gardens must take steps to ensure its proper fencing.

The only claim for the severance of relationship on specific grounds of severance, as opposed to repayments of benefits conferred, which is permissible is in the case of a man or woman denying the Pu. The Pu is an important person often taking a more active interest in the charge than its parents. A party's mother's father may be his Pu, or the mother's brother or mother's brother's son. Such a party is entitled to Nine shillings when the party gets married and Three shillings from the party's heir when the party dies. Failure to meet these dues entails liability to a charge of breaking relationship, which in the case of a Pu means a fine of £3. The function of a Pu is that of a guardian or conscientious godfather.

A rather elaborate system of paying for hospitality offered exists under the name of Chawman or price of food. Such a claim, which amounts to £3, is not admissible at the hands of a blood relative or a Pu. A family that is housed may be liable to pay this £3 when they leave as a whole, or individually, if they leave separately. If the lodgers concerned are turned out no claim can lie. This provision provides a loophole and cases do arise when eviction has been claimed but which has been shown to have been justified by the calculated aggravation afforded by the lodgers. Having lodgers is a mixed blessing because the house owner is responsible for meeting claims due to misdemeanours by the lodgers. For the claim to be capable of substantiation the stay must have been two weeks or so at the minimum and new immigrants to a village are not considered liable.

Connected with Chawman in a way is the old term of BAWIMAN. The term BAWI was applied to a man who had, in certain circumstances, become a member of the Chief's household. If he wished to free himself he had to pay a due of £3 to the Chief known as BAWIMAN. In the next Chapter an account of the whole controversy over this relationship which arose as a result of mission forces will be given.

CEREMONIES

The Lushais like many other hill people and those living amid hard environments can have no sense of happiness unless buoyed up by the confidence that they have taken all steps possible to propitiate the spirits of good and of evil. The customs we have just examined disclose a very comprehensive and almost scientific code of family and social relations, a condition which would suggest an accompaniment of appropriate ceremonies and sacrifices on an extensive scale.

Ceremonies are performed at birth and at death, in illness, associations with the hunt, calamity, crops, unnatural deaths in the forests or, in the case of woman, at childbirth. Also when at war, and in fact in connection with every possible phase of life. It is this constant association of every situation in life with the presence of the supernatural that made these people so orderly, so religious, and so great.

Rich men, inspired by the desire for security in the after life and for the admiration of their own little world, as well as to gain social privileges, such as the right to have a window in their houses opposite the hearth, to wear a treasured specially striped, cloth of fame, and a turban, used to perform expensive ceremonies like Khuangchawi. This ceremony consists of five or six phases and it often used to take several years for all the phases to be completed, due to the prodigious expense involved in the provision of cattle and Zu. This ceremony is very rarely attempted nowadays due to the arrival of Christianity and the more parsimonious attitude of more modern Lushai.

The form of sacrifice affecting the more ordinary man on meeting some misfortune is of general interest as it is the attitude of the ordinary man that is of such importance when matters of culture impacts arise and vast changes threaten whole communities.

Two young pigs are killed in one evening and the portion for the HNUATE, who are the unreliable and evil spirits living below the house, is placed in a space in the house between the front wall and the hearth, while the offering

for the Chung or higher ones is placed under the roof which hangs over the Lushai veranda.

The following day no members of the sacrificing house may leave their house, neither may they communicate with any strangers, and to mark the house as a forbidden place a branch of a tree with thick green leaves is placed outside the house near the front door as a sign for all.

Three days after this sacrifice another sacrifice called the VANREN is performed in which case the spirit offering of animal flesh must be placed above the water storage place in the roof, while all other features are the same as for the HINUAITE ceremony.

Again two days later the HINUAIPUI ceremony will take place when a female full grown pig will be killed and this is then cooked under the house, the spirit offering being buried in a pit and re-covered with earth, over which a large stone is placed. The flesh is brought into the house surreptitiously, by the back entrance to the house and then eaten by the inmates only.

Three days later yet another sacrifice is still necessary known as the SAKHUA, and a large male pig has to be killed and at the end of this ceremony normal life may once again be taken up.

If during any of these sacrifices anyone should leave the house or a stranger enter it by mistake or intent the whole proceedings would be considered null and void. If any party could be held responsible he would have to meet the whole of the expenses, incurred so needlessly, on this attempt to propitiate the spirits.

Enough has been recorded in this Chapter to stress the consistency and ingenuity of the Lushai people in devising a code for social and communal bearing. On close examination it will be difficult to perceive any part of the chain which would, under some great stress, necessarily cause any revulsion in the individual against society's rules and customs.

It should only be with the greatest care and only as a result of the considered and sincere understanding of the people that any changes should ever be sanctioned. To change or modify one link in the structure is to impose

additional strain, or even to cause atrophy, elsewhere, thus throwing out the whole balance and resulting in a substitution of a feeling of insecurity for that sense of social security which should be the inheritance of age-long experience and trial.

What happens when superimposed forces of an alien nature take a hand can be seen in one case, which is discussed under the heading of "the BAWI CONTROVERSY" in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER V

"THE BAWI CONTROVERSY"

1910-1911

THE English translation of the Lushai term BAWI, the approach of a self-opinionated doctor engaged upon missionary work among a backward people, the circumstances attending the BAWI system, and the peculiar characteristics of administration in the Lushai Hills, all combined to provide a sensational chapter in the early development of the Lushai Hills.

The term BAWI had been described in the first dictionary rendering of the Lushai language as meaning "Slave" or "retainer". At the time that this description took shape no deep study of the language had been possible, but the term "slave" afforded great grounds for antagonism in the minds of conscientious social workers. A superficial knowledge of the BAWI system and allied customs provided the inspiration for the crusade.

A BAWI was an individual who was dependent upon a Lushai Chief. There were three main categories into which BAWIS fell. The Lushai names for these were INPUI CHHUNG, CHEMSEN, and TUKLUT. The term INPUI CHHUNG means literally, within the big house, 'IN' being house, 'PUI' big, and 'CHHUNG' within. This term was applied to a person who in poverty, sickness, or distress, had sought, and received, protection at the hands of the Chief. The CHEMSEN BAWI was in a different position as may be indicated by the meaning of the term, CHEM being a knife, and SEN meaning red, or in short a murderer. Such a person would seek sanctuary with the Chief, regardless of cost, in return for protection in the face of certain retribution if his plea failed. It is easy to visualise the scene as such an individual broke in on the easy security of the Chief's entourage throwing himself down before the Chief, his enraged pursuers chasing him,

bent on immediate vengeance. Sanctuary, life, the abandonment of his freedom, perhaps that of his progeny, were all worth the gamble of the future in the face of a certain and probably deserved death. This kind of CHEMSEN BAWI was under no obligation to work for the Chief but the measure of submission was great in that the Chief acquired the right to the marriage price of his CHEMSEN BAWI's daughters, when they came of marriageable age. With the advent of the British Administration conditions productive of this type of BAWI ceased to exist and later mention of the term at all would probably be confined to cases for defamation, arising out of provocative reference to a dim past, during some drunken brawl.

The last type of BAWI can certainly no longer exist though, at the time of the controversy, this type still had to be considered. This type was the TUK LUT BAWI meaning the BAWI who "promised to enter", the TUK meaning promise and LUT meaning to enter. This type covered the defeated in battle who, to save their skins, surrendered themselves and, perhaps, their ultimate families to the Chief.

Neither, however, of these last two types of BAWIs had been recognised by the British Administration on the arbitrary finding that there seemed no legal sanction for such practices. The TUK LUT BAWI was comparatively free in that he was permitted to live in a separate house while custom provided for the redemption of his freedom by payment to the Chief of a Mithan or its equivalent in value. A British Court would free any CHEMSEN BAWI who appealed for freedom.

It was, however, on the subject of the first-named type of BAWI that controversy arose on the ground that the terms of the association amounted to slavery. What a term ! What a chance ! Slavery, which has implied so much, a term which conjures up before the minds of free people loathsome visions of human contraband being whipped along sun-baked streets at the whim of some dissolute bully, or winsome girls being tossed to any willing to pay, or capable of paying, the petty sale price to authorise their subjection to abandon. Articles began to appear in the papers.

"LUSHAI SLAVERY"

Remarkable letter to Mr. Montague.

APPEAL FOR ACTION

(REUTER'S SERVICE)

London, July 13th, 1913.

"The ANTI-SLAVERY and ABORIGINES PROTECTION SOCIETY publishes a letter addressed to Mr. Montague dated July 8th, referring to the so-called Bori (spelt incorrectly according to modern notions) system in the Lushai Hills which system it describes as slavery.

"The Society appeals to Mr. Montague to take immediate action to procure the freedom of the slaves, the masters receiving compensation."

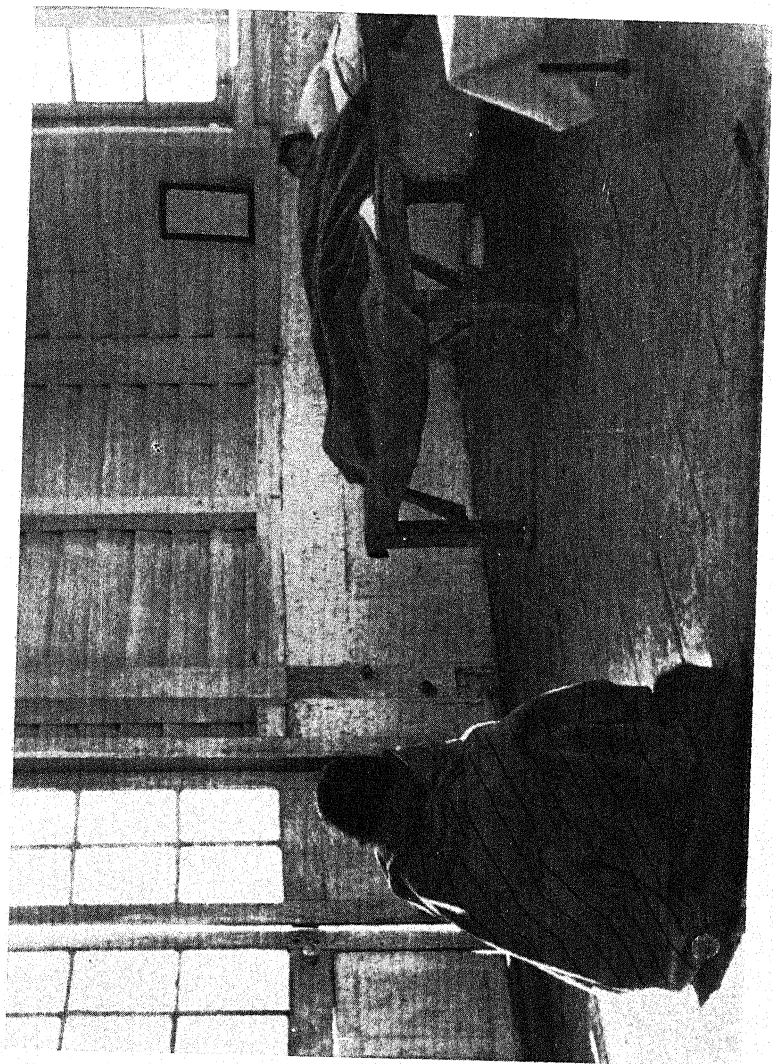
But the better to form some opinion as to the measure of slavery actually involved in the BAWI system it is necessary to examine some of the implications of being an IN CHHUNG BAWI, or a BAWI who had sought the protection of the Chief on account of the individual's inability to maintain body and soul and this in a country which is so hard as to permit no weaknesses or mistakes.

In return for what was, in most cases, almost paternal care the IN PUI CHHUNG BAWI was expected to work on the same lines, within his or her physical capacity, as a Lushai would have worked when living a normal existence within the Lushai social framework. The IN PUI CHHUNG BAWI shared the various perquisites common to most Chiefs' establishments in the shape of a more lavish table, generous supplies of rice beer, and meat from the chase or from customary sacrifices. Moreover, the Chief would procure a wife for the young male BAWI and would generally succour him as his own in times of scarcity. In no case was there any physical restriction on where a BAWI lived within the Chief's village precincts, after he had been married for three years. This period of three years would be increased to six if the BAWI married a female BAWI. On his setting up a separate house he would be known as INHRANG BAWI, 'IN' meaning house and 'HRANG'

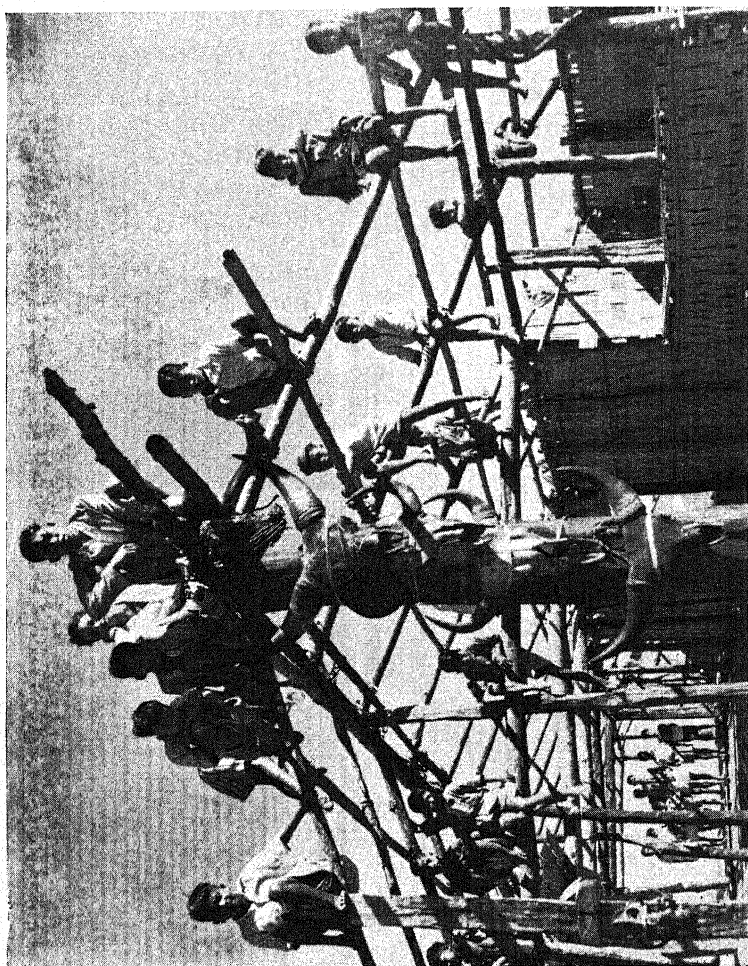
separate. His status, however, was perpetually marked by his responsibility for offering to the Chief the hind leg of any animal which at any time he might kill. Failure to do this would entail a fine in favour of the Chief of one Mithan. But such a liability also exists among relations, as in the case of a man having to give to his Pu, i.e. his mother's brother.

At times the Chief himself might be in difficulty when it was expected of the BAWI that he should render material assistance to the Chief, if the former's condition permitted of this.

A BAWI could at any time leave his own Chief provided he joined another Chief, as the Lushai Chiefs looked upon themselves as one great family. Where a BAWI elected to change his master his liability remained unaltered. But discharge of this liability was usually made feasible by the BAWI paying the Chief, under whom he was living, a Mithan or its equivalent. There were, however, small differences of opinion among the Chiefs on certain points concerning the liability of a BAWI. Some Chiefs held that they were entitled to the marriage prices of daughters of their own BAWIS, in all cases where the Chief himself had paid the marriage price of the wife. This was not by Lushai custom an unreasonable attitude. Others held that it was only the younger son who inherited his BAWI father's property and who retained liability as a BAWI, his brothers and sisters being quite free. Unless all the family members left the Chief, at the time when the BAWI liability was finally discharged, some Chiefs insisted later on the full redemption price of one Mithan being paid to them if and when the remaining members of the family decided to discharge their liability and to move on. This again was a view quite in accordance with the Lushai custom in relation to the practice of Chawman or the return of hospitality price among ordinary Lushais discussed on page 117. These differences of opinion were quite fair and, in point of fact, the differences only arose through some Chiefs being willing to modify the more extreme provisions of Lushai customs in favour of their BAWIS. If a female BAWI was married from the Chief's house the



The nearest medical aid; a dispensary 200 miles from any railroad.



THE HOUSE BUILDERS

Chief would enjoy her price but would make no further claim on her or her family.

The reader may be wondering on what points attempt had been made to sustain the challenge of the existence of slavery in the Lushai Hills, especially in view of the general character of Lushai customs, as described in the previous Chapter. The main point was that the children of an IN PUI CHHUNG BAWI, or even an IN HRANG BAWI, might be born into the status of BAWI, a position which, it was argued, implied a sense of physical surrender without choice, the acceptance of a liability with no part in its creation. But throughout the whole economic and social life of the Lushai people runs the age-long and established principle that a son is liable for the debts of his father. To pitch on one application of this principle and to launch an unbridled attack on the BAWI system was so unreasonable as to invite the most bitter of controversies. On the one hand, the Chiefs saw their age-long rights challenged, while the people visualised closure of their only loophole against fate, and the Mission concerned were placed in the invidious position of having to contemplate with distaste one of their members taking an independent line, involving considerable hostility from many of the Lushais, while at the same time the administration was being compromised by a political complication which it had had no part in causing. The cause of all this was a certain Doctor, a man of great professional ability and the highest of ideals, a man of reputed sincerity and one who had been willing to devote his professional ability to the relief of suffering among the poor, when he might rather have applied himself on very remunerative activities. Let him be referred to as Doctor A.

The basis for this earnest man's attitude was that in his opinion the BAWI system was so unjust that he was authorised by Exodus, Chapter Twenty, verses Three to Seven, and Ezekiel, Chapter Three, verses Sixteen to Twenty-one to combat to the limit this custom, despite the fact that he was acting on his own findings and dealing with an animist people of changeable propensities. The specific point on which he really relied was that the obligations

inherent in the status of BAWI were hereditary, although he was not prepared to make any allowance for the fact that family debts of most descriptions were also hereditary. His zeal gained further fervour in the belief that it was he, and he alone, who had been charged with the opportunity of righting wrongs which his missionary colleagues had condoned for many years. Moreover, he claimed an entirely unfettered discretion in his right to assess by his own conscience the quality of local custom and practice in relation to the word of God, going so far as to defy any temporal authority relying only on his own assessment of Divine sanction. In all negotiations with local authorities it seems only too clear that Doctor A acted by calculation in pursuance of a set plan, conceived with the object of enabling him to achieve spectacular changes in age-long, indigenous, Lushai custom. The result was a deadlock and the emergence of Dr. A's personal position as the immediate and critical problem.

Local authorities of the administration and the mission, while not wishing to sanction in perpetuity any grounds for serious hardships, which might be established, were at the same time aware of the danger of interfering impetuously in any indigenous system of hereditary social obligations. Moreover, the whole territory had only been under British control for an odd fifteen years and it was generally thought at the time that more harm than good was likely to result from any alienation of the Lushai Chiefs and the many who would, sooner or later, realise the gap that had been made in their system of social security. The change contemplated was not in any way the result of established cases of hardship but was merely the result of the Doctor's arbitrary assessments. The Doctor's schemes, incidentally, made no provision for the safety of all those who would no longer be able to avail themselves, as before, of their own free will, of the opportunities which lay for them in the BAWI system. Controversy raged. Some of the people agitated against any interference. Many expressed apprehension. There was much talk of "freeing the people" but no talk of their security after being freed.

Ultimately, the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, placed

proposals, which had the unanimous support of the missionaries, before Dr. A with the intimation that counter proposals would be welcomed and considered. Dr. A's reply was in his actions, indiscriminately freeing people who were living as BAWIS and in one case he paid money to a Chief on this account when the dues were not the Chief's to enjoy ! Dr. A subsequently declined to examine this case or to admit it, though he refused to accept the money back from the Chief when tendered by him, in accordance with the orders passed by the Superintendent, Lushai Hills. Though the Chief had released the BAWIS for a consideration which was illegal it became clear that Dr. A placed more moment on the actual release of the BAWIS "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the name of King Edward" than on the fact that the release was illegal. Dr. A who by this time was appearing almost in the garb of a self-created divinity further complicated the local situation by openly urging the Lushais not to comply with the executive orders of the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, for the customary and annual supply of goats on payment for the use of the local Military Police Battalion stationed at Aijal, and at Lungleh in the South Lushai Hills. The goats were required for the worship by Hindus of their Gods in the Hindu Pujahs. As the Doctor was exceeding his sanction for residence in the Lushai Hills, which only extended to preaching the gospel and the performance of medical work, the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, called on the Doctor either to leave the Hills forthwith or sign an agreement which read as follows :—

"I hereby undertake that during my future residence in the Lushai Hills I will confine myself entirely to the work of a medical missionary, namely, religious instruction and medical treatment and that I will interfere in no way whatsoever in Lushai complaints or disputes of any description nor in any matter that should properly come before the Courts and that whatever be my private opinions as to Lushai custom I will at all times avoid giving expression to them to any Lushai.

"I further agree that all persons who may complain

to me about secular matters will be at once referred to the Superintendent or his Assistants, if it is a matter which should be decided by the Courts, or to the local Senior Missionary. It will be my endeavour to prevent any of my employees or other persons under my authority from interfering, in any manner whatsoever, with disputes among Lushais other than those arising between residents of my compound.

"In the event of any injustice coming to my personal notice I further undertake to take no steps, except in conjunction with the Senior Missionary, who will make any representation on the matter to Government.

"For as long as may be necessary I undertake to consult the Superintendent before making extended tours in areas which the Superintendent may consider it, politically, inadvisable for the time being for me to visit, and I agree to accept his decision as final. In the event of any breach of this undertaking I agree to leave the Lushai Hills within one month."

The Superintendent was aware that the Doctor was bringing the administration into contempt among a people who were only too ready to rally on the wrong side of the law and who had not been long under British rule and he was also aware that the Doctor's life would not be safe, in certain parts of the District, and that the least desirable incident that could happen would be some act of violence against the Doctor's person. Moreover, he did not exceed his rights in any part of the context of the agreement. But the agreement was the match to the powder so far as the Doctor was concerned.

The Doctor flatly refused once again to accept this approach by the Superintendent, Lushai Hills. Government were then compelled to order his withdrawal from the Hills. The Doctor then went so far as to petition His Majesty though he declared beforehand he could not bow to any decision by His Majesty which conflicted with his own conscience.

At this stage legal complications arose, for only by obtaining a conviction under the Indian Penal Code could the Doctor's body in any way be restrained by physical force,

he being a European British subject, and specially protected, the framers of the Law not foreseeing the possibility of a European taking up a subversive attitude in open defiance to the administration of the District. At this stage, however, the situation was relieved by the Doctor himself leaving the District so that the need for special legislation to deal with his person did not arise.

The end was peculiarly humiliating in that when the time came for the Doctor to undertake the seven days' march out of the District by bridle path to Cachar no Lushais came forward of their own free will to carry down his baggage. The Doctor spent his own money on "freeing" the Lushais and was ignominiously leaving his chosen course on their behalf, yet those for whom he had stood passed him by.

Some time after the Doctor's withdrawal, the subject of controversy was taken up and a settlement effected, the main points briefly being as follows :—

1. The use of the word BAWI to be discontinued as far as possible due to its association with the wider sense of slavery.
2. Claims by Chiefs against parties alleged to be BAWIS should adopt the same form as in all customary cases among the general public on which the issue was recovery of the customary Rs. 40* or 1 Mithan Chawman or board and lodging costs.
3. That in the case of CHEMSEN BAWIS and TUK LUR BAWIS, types which are in any case fast dying out and which have never been recognised by the Administration, any claims put forward would on decision be limited to the specific amount of the consideration, if any, received.
4. The maximum liability of a BAWI on seeking freedom be accepted as Rs. 40 or 1 Mithan for a whole family.
5. A BAWI might leave his benefactor at will, it being open to the Chief then to sue—he having no remedy to demand service, by force, pending the settlement of the freedom price.

* £3 0. 0.

6. Questions arising out of disputes over BAWIS should, as far as possible, be decided on the lines of Lushai custom as applied to ordinary cases of Chawman.

These points were in no way revolutionary and only recorded the ordinary practice by local Officers at the time and were approved by all local authorities.

The authors of the Dictionary admitted in retrospect that it was unhappy that their original translation of the word BAWI included any reference to slavery as the word 'Pauper' would have been equally descriptive and less provocative.

The points, however, had the general effect of heading the Chiefs off the practice of giving hospitality to the down and outs. The Chiefs lost much in prestige as well as materially. It was by such dependents that the Chiefs increased their wealth. It was fair wealth for it accrued only when the parties rallied, grew, and multiplied, while the system provided plenty to go round for the really weak and aged, who could always watch children, cattle, or the cooking pot. Under present conditions no case exists for Chiefs to take in all the down and outs, over whom they do not have the erstwhile reciprocal binding.

No machinery has yet been devised by Lushai genius to give comfort and safety to the infirm in the same way that the Chiefs used to afford their BAWIS. The only possible justification for the Doctor's crusade would have been if he had been able to create in the hearts of Lushai, as though overnight, the lessons of the religion which had been the Doctor's inspiration.

The legacy is the Lushai beggar, the outcasts for whom society has no provision. The old are often shouldered out from the family as they are a mouth, with no assets. Now the suffering of many is greater than in the old days even though society to-day would claim increasing enlightenment. The Doctor's effort resulted eventually in the Chiefs being deprived of age-long rights which rarely, if ever, operated in unjustified hardship. The mantle has not been adequately accepted by any who were joint participators in the "greater freedom" movement. Does not this fact lend a pointer?

It is easy to make out a colourful case against parts of an indigenous system, viewed by Western standards, but this can never justify the superimposition of alien ideas piecemeal. To stress a strain in one direction is to create a repercussion, a lack of balance, elsewhere. If changes come and come they must, let them come from within, not without, and let provision for the effects be made and let it be assured that this provision will dovetail into the general framework and will not foul the wheels or upset the balances.

CHAPTER VI

LITIGATION

THROUGH litigation it is sometimes possible to discern trends not ordinarily obvious in the everyday contacts with a people. It would not be wise to conceive a technique for any administrative approach without some knowledge of the litigious propensities of the people. Let us look at some ordinary cases that have been presented in Court. The term Court implies an officer sitting alone at Headquarters or on a hill-side or at some staging bungalow, no agents or pleaders taking part.

Indigenously, lying was both dangerous and rare, because of the danger from the spirits who would surely detect the lies, where man might perhaps fail. Christianity provides a loophole, from the Lushai point of view, in that if we sincerely confess our sins before God, and believe in Jesus Christ, our sins may be forgiven. Thus if there is a risk in sinning there is under Christianity yet a hope of forgiveness. Instinctively the Lushai is not a liar. Sophisticated Lushai, however, may well be bold enough to be a little elastic! Old Lushai did not lie lightly. Take such an oath as this :—

“I, Thangliana am speaking the truth in this matter. I am not speaking falsely. If I am speaking falsely may the sun and the moon see it; may my mother and my father know it; may my brothers and sisters know it; may my wife and my children know it; and may I become stones and earth.”

To one denied the faith which we Christians, automatically almost, now accept, such words are serious words, brave words. None could speak such words if by so doing he was deliberately tempting the Gods of all the skies, the evil spirits of the dark woods, the elusiveness of the mountain lights.

Some would take oath on a tiger's tooth by making

statements and then biting on a tiger's tooth. The speaking of a falsehood in such circumstances invited death by a tiger within a period of six months or so. Death was of course caused sometimes by the inner feeling consequent upon the deliberate statement of a falsehood, fanned by the fear of the inevitability of some dreadful death at the hands of a tiger, springing like a whirlwind from nowhere and mercilessly crushing his victim to death.

Christianity has banished such fears; only instinct remains as a check, for Christianity offers forgiveness. In such a mind is litigation conducted to-day.

The narrative of evidence in the cases below is presented as concisely as possible and not as actually offered. The Court is often laboured by numerous side tracks which drag out the proceedings and yet which the kind of litigant concerned must emphasize to avoid losing the whole momentum of his case. If a knife was concerned it is of little consequence to an assault case that it was this particular knife, which the owner used that day, when at one stroke on three consecutive occasions he cut in half an onion, which his friend's aunt produced from a basket, which at one time had contained the blue thread, which so-and-so's mother had presented to her daughter on the occasion of her marriage day, the day when so-and-so also got the news that his uncle had, etc., etc. The whole way in which a clan mind can work and in which it expresses itself is a subject on which there has already been considerable anthropological study. It would not serve the purpose of this book, however, to lengthen the narrative by a full presentation of the form of the evidence.

LAIA LUSHAI, THE CITY MAN FROM DISTANT BURMA

CASE

Laia Lushai was a rather bold fellow and he decided in his early days to undertake the venturesome journey to the great unknown of Burma in order to seek possibilities of fortune. After fifteen years of keeping his head above water, of hearing many things of diverse interest and

intrigue, of seeing how others attained success, and of drinking deep of the waters of exotic Burma, Laia Lushai returned to his ancient village in Lushai, which he found comparatively unchanged through the years of his long absence in foreign lands. But within the short time of a month or so Laia found one Hmingliani, a fair Lushai girl, homely, beautiful, and to his liking, and the irresistible desire grew in his heart that he must possess this belle, and his worldly and experienced efforts were easily crowned with success. But, nevertheless, as befitted such a city man, on the one hand, and the father of such a beautiful creature on the other, a substantial price had to be paid for this lady's marriage price. As prices have to be paid, Laia found himself in need to meet this obligation in the most simple manner in accordance with true Lushai habit. It was this simple need that gave rise to much litigation.

Laia was to know when he grew up that, after all, he was but an orphan, and that he had been brought up by one Taichhungi and her husband Chemkua, who had unhappily died four years previously, during Laia's absence in far off Burma. But this realisation did not prevent him from conceiving a comparatively easy channel by which to recover the money necessary to satisfy the demands of his father-in-law, the father of beautiful Hmingliani. By Lushai custom when a Lushai husband died the widow may have no sexual relations with any man for at least three months and even then not until she had performed what is known as the Thlahual ceremony as soon after three months after death as is suitable on all counts. Until this has taken place she should remain in her late husband's house. It thus occurred to Laia that if he could show that Taichhungi had had sexual intercourse with some young men before performing the Thlahual he would be able to demand from her, who was practically his foster mother, the return of all the marriage price which Taichhungi's husband, the adopted father of the orphan Laia, had paid for Taichhungi, his bride. So Laia set about his deep laid plan.

Laia contested that any Thlahual ceremony had been performed. Taichhungi was hard put to disprove this

challenge but she called the village writer, two others, and also a relation of her dead husband, one Rumliana, a devout Christian. Taichhungi was able to show that when she was erecting the tablet to the memory of her dead husband many were present and that, as she was about to kill a fowl and perform the ceremony required by Lushai custom, Rumliana remonstrated with her on the lines that they, being Christian people, no such ceremony was valid. But Taichhungi was wise in her generation and she took the line that, if this is what her husband's relatives thought, she had no objection, provided she was given some letter to prove that she at least had not failed by Lushai custom. Before the Appellate Court this letter was produced and supported by reliable evidence. But when the Chief and his elders had tried the case in their village they claimed that they saw no such document. But it also transpired that the Chief and his elders were squeamish at being parties to accepting Taichhungi's claim she had performed the customary Thlahual ceremony when they were such Christians that they could not condone such a show of Lushai custom, with its heathenish suggestions. The Chief, aided by his elders, therefore, saw fit to hold that no such ceremony could have been held to have been performed, knowing then full well that Taichhungi's occasional surrenders to romance with one or two of the village's strongest and appropriately virile young men could now be held against her as adulterous associations, which would render her liable to return all her marriage price. Thus Taichhungi found herself in no end of a mess and she was compelled to wonder after all if the return into her little world of this smart city man Laia Lushai was so interesting and exciting. If she was to submit to the Order of the Chief and his elders she would have to go to her brother who was ultimately responsible and would have to ask him to meet this obligation. This might well involve one or perhaps even more severe beatings. She would forfeit all claims on her dead husband's people whose duty it was to nurse and keep her, for she had given good children to the family of her husband, even if by ill luck these had since died.

So Laia Lushai, the city man from distant Burma, found

himself successful in his claim to compel Taichhungi who had given him his start in life—a life that would have been extinct by ancient custom as by custom he would have been buried alive with his mother at her death—to pay back the marriage price her husband's people had paid. He even hoped to cause Taichhungi's brother, who was in customary law the man to make good the due, to disgorge early enough to enable him to satisfy Hmingliani's hunger and her proud father. Laia's satisfaction, however, was crowned by the realisation that as the adopted son of Taichhungi's husband, remarkable though it might be, it was he and he alone who as heir would be the very man to realise from Taichhungi's unhappy brother this large sum of money.

But the long term investments and schemes of Laia, the city man from distant Burma, were torpedoed by the orders of the appellate court which insisted on some unpleasant demands on the participators in this subtle intrigue, an intrigue the more difficult to suspect as it was perpetrated at the hands of administrators of customary law. Laia was given seven days to decide whether he would settle down to honest cultivation and customary life in Lushai or whether he would reopen in his line of business again in distant Burma. The Chief and his elders were called on to show cause why they should not pay a fine of Rs. 40—for perpetrating the injustice of allowing a weak and helpless woman to be blackmailed because they declined to make an award by custom in deference to unacceptable claims by the well-to-do parties that, being Christians, they could not be a party to the customs of the land, thereby almost, as in the Hindu religion, condemning the widow to celibacy, against all local custom from time immemorial. The woman was given a certain time to return to where she should be, that is with her brother, in view of the fact that her happy relations with her own family and her late husband's house and village had all been rudely disturbed by Laia, the city man from distant Burma, who had returned after fifteen years and who had taken to wife the beautiful Hmingliani whose proud father so desired his lavish price for his gem that he had to be satisfied early by payment

of Hmingliani's price, which was to be realised from Taichhungi's innocent brother, even though Taichhungi had brought up the orphan Laia, and even though it was the orphan Laia who was to enjoy the price recovered from Taichhungi's innocent brother, even as he was to enjoy also the beautiful belle Hmingliani !!

CHAWNI'S CLAIM FOR DEFAMATION

A Chief, without giving reasons, dismissed a claim for defamation of character brought by a lady called Chawni against Laliana on the grounds that Laliana had said Chawni had had sexual connection with another, a statement which resulted in Chawni's husband taking the opportunity of divorcing her on the grounds of her adultery.

Chawni appealed. The appellate court called witnesses and the purport of their pleadings is given below.

Chawni appellant

We were all in Taia's house, Laliana being present. It was late and Laliana had a headache, was drunk, and was vomiting. My friends were also drunk. I poured water on Laliana's head, and at this time I lay near him, but not over him.

Laliana had on one occasion in Hmingliana's house come to call Hmingliana's son, Zakhama, to come and join him in drinking. He also asked me to come. We refused and he actually pulled down my dress and took away my blouse which he showed to others, till Zakhama rebuked him.

Laliana

Chawni can say nothing as I had sexual intercourse with her. Three others saw us while we were having connection. Once I had sexual connection with Chawni in the jungles when I kept back the dress which I had taken down and her coat also, so that I could show these to others who would admire my achievement.

Witness in support of Laliana

My brother had died, so we were having a wake. My mother was also present. Chawni poured water over Laliana as he had a headache, but Chawni was later called by her husband.

By the light of the fire burning dimly we were able to peep at Chawni having sexual intercourse with Laliana. No one was badly drunk. I could see clearly that Chawni was wearing no dress and that her body was moving energetically.

Second witness in support of Laliana

I was present at the wake and was with the others, none of us badly drunk. I also saw Laliana and Chawni together—I do not know if they had sexual intercourse. I did not see them. When I saw them together Chawni was pouring water over Laliana's head and there was no impropriety. I do not think there was because, when I saw them, Chawni was not in a position in which sexual intercourse was possible.

APPEAL ORDER

Laliana's witnesses do not satisfactorily bear out this contention that he had sexual intercourse with Chawni and there is reason to believe that Laliana indulges in flights of fancy, coloured, perhaps, by the Bacchanalian atmosphere surrounding the alleged cause of action. Chawni's husband's appeal to claim his wife was taken in adultery is dismissed. The Chief's order dismissing Chawni's claim for defamation against Laliana is revised and Laliana must pay Chawni the customary fine of Rs. 40 for claiming he seduced Chawni and yet not being able to convince the Court of this beyond all reasonable doubt.

NOTE

To understand the significance of this case Lushai custom must be recalled.

If Laliana could establish his success with Chawni he

would not be in any way liable by Lushai custom. But Chawni, on the other hand, would have to pay very dearly. Being caught in adultery, her husband could divorce her and recover all the price he had paid for her to her father or brother. With this newly found money he could take his pick and take a snappy young wife, still keeping the children by the first marriage and hoping for more by the new one. Chawni would probably fail to find a husband again and would permanently have to give up her own children. She would be hated in her home as she would have brought no gain, only humiliation, to her father's house. She might even be soundly thrashed.

Was Laliana acting in collusion with Chawni's husband ?

“ The case of *the husband out late* ”

Tlangsami accused

It is true that I caught hold of the hairs of both my husband Vunga and Saithuami at one o'clock at night when they were both on the veranda of Saithuami's house.

Saithuami is the Chief's daughter.

After seizing their hairs I went into Saithuami's house. Vunga, my husband, asked me how I knew that he was at Saithuami's house. I told him I had heard him speak and that his voice carried.

Saithuami invited me into her house. I entered, but no talk ensued. I did not even sit down. My husband left and I caught him up a little later along the road.

Vunga had been drinking Zu in the house of the Chief or Saithuami, and I did not approve.

Vunga, husband of Tlangsami

I entered Saithuami's house to roll a cigarette from my tobacco. I was returning from the Chief's house at the time. In fact I was returning from Saithuami. When I was at the Chief's house, my wife Tlangsami was with my mother who was ill. I did not call in at my mother's house before visiting the Chief's house, but I did say I would call in later.

It was about one o'clock at night that my wife found me on the veranda of Saithuami's house.

Saithuami

My husband had been away five months. On this night my father, the Chief, had no tobacco and I had none to give him, so I called in Vunga to give some. Vunga was only on my veranda for just sufficient time for me to pass water, when his wife, TLANGSAMI, arrived. Her house is quite a long way from mine. Vunga's mother's house is a little nearer.

I have no idea from where TLANGSAMI appeared. When Tlangsami seized my hair I asked her why she did it, to which Tlangsami replied : " You are a wife and Vunga is my husband—What are you doing together on your veranda ?

ORDER

SAITHUAMI's claim against TLANGSAMI for unjustified assault is dismissed. Saithuami's action as a grass widow calling in another's husband to take tobacco from her after midnight was tactless, if not worse. TLANGSAMI had evidently been expecting her husband to be at his mother's sick bed, as he had promised, and possibly being on the look out for the vagrant cannot be blamed for taking charge of him and sticking up for her own rights.

THE AFFAIR BETWEEN ROHLIRA AND KHIMI

Lalmawia :—

I am the father of Rohlira. I sent an intermediary, Thangliana, to Kapthianga, who is father of Khimi in order to let Kapthianga know that my son had had sexual connection with Khimi and was enamoured of her and wished to marry her. But I was surprised when Thangliana returned and told me that my statement was denied and that Kapthianga was displeased.

Thangliana :—

I frankly asked Kapthianga if he was willing to allow Rohlira to take Khimi for wife, seeing that Rohlira had had sexual intercourse with her and desired her. Kapthianga replied that if this was the case he had no objection.

But Khimi expressed the utmost indignation, denying sexual intercourse with Rohlira. She went on to say also that Rohlira had told her he had been able to touch the breasts of both Suakliani and Thawkzawli.

So I returned and told Lalmawia what had happened.

Khimi :—

I am displeased. Rohlira never asked me to marry him before. He has announced that he has had sexual intercourse with me so that he can press his claim on me to marry him.

Kapthianga, father of Khimi :—

Rohlira speaks in a contradictory manner. When the Chief first asked him Rohlira said he had seduced Khimi six times, but when he was speaking before the Chief and Elders later he claimed he had had sexual connection with Khimi on no less than twenty-six occasions.

Rohlira :—

I with Khimi went to the jhum and in a jhum house in the absence of others Khimi allowed me to fondle her breasts, I sought sexual intercourse then and there. She declined saying I must wait till that night. At night I was successful—in her house, where her mother and younger sister and brother were all sleeping. It was at weeding time last August. This was the first occasion I had had anything to do with this girl. I kept my secret because I wished to marry her. Three weeks later, when her father went away, I had sexual intercourse with her near her house.

I cannot say how many times I have repeated my success.

I asked Khimi to marry me saying that if she refused I would demand Rs. 40 and she said to me that if I refused to marry her she would demand Rs. 40.

I have said nothing to anyone about having sexual intercourse with Khimi before this case because I am a Christian and I wish to marry her in a Christian Church.

CHIEF'S ORDER

I with my Elders have heard Rohlira's claim that he seduced Khimi though she firmly denies this. No evidence was available and we all believe the young man has been unreasonably boastful so we fined him Rs. 5 as Court's fees only, warning parties to be of good behaviour in the future.

Signed LALHULIANA.

Chief of Ramlai.

(The Court's fees amount to Rs. 5, or a pig, payable by the loser in any suit heard by a Chief's Court.)

APPEAL ORDER

The Chief found Rohlira could not prove his case. This also was the impression of this Court, gained from a perusal of the written records.

But the Chief has failed to apply Lushai custom which demands a fine of Rs. 40, or a Mithan, against a man who defames a girl's character or anyone else's for that matter.

I note that the man's party includes men in influential quarters, Church and Lay, which may account for the Chief's compromise award which is bad in Lushai Law.

Rohlira must pay the customary award to Khimi's parents and Khimi's appeal is, therefore, allowed.

NOTE ON THE CASE

There may be perceived in this case a hint of the confusion inseparable from attempts to run new religious customs concurrently with the age-long and established customs which Government are pledged to sustain.

Rohlira claimed he was freely having intercourse with Khimi. He was prevented, he says, from proclaiming his successes because he aspired to a high class and modern Christian marriage. In his sense of insecurity he claims he entered into an alliance with Khimi that a broken promise would involve either at fault in a fine of Rs. 40, an alliance that no Court could by custom have upheld.

It is not impossible that Khimi persistently declined

Rohlira's advances which drove him to conceive the idea of bringing Khimi to her knees by announcing the *fait accompli* of her seduction. By custom her seduction was no great shame, but if the fact became established she would have been turned out of the Church and their Church wedding would have vanished into air. It is also not impossible that Khimi is a hard case and, though fully conscious of her long intimacy with Rohlira, she knew he would not be able to prove it and so took her stand of denial.

There is ground for real suspicion that the Bench made the award low, hoping the matter would rest, all being interested that neither of the litigants should fall within any jurisdiction of Church admonition.

It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that after this general flare-up the couple did not subsequently marry quite happily!

CONSPIRACY AND MURDER

A report signed by a village elder named Taia was received by the Superintendent saying that the Chief's son had been missing for twenty-four hours, since Saturday.

This Chief's son had incurred the wrath of the villagers because he had undertaken to market over £100 worth of their cotton and he had only produced £30 in cash for distribution.

The combination of these factors led to suspicions arising at Headquarters. Moreover, it was observed that Taia Elder had reported to the Superintendent direct and *not* to the Superintendent's Police Officer, who lived in the next village nearby, and who could have been on the spot within a few hours.

As soon as the Superintendent got to hear of this matter he sent word to the Police Officer to investigate. Two men, Ranga and Bawktea, made a confession to this officer. They said they had attacked the Chief's son because the Chief had paid them Rs. 20 to "do in" his son on behalf of the villagers as the Chief was angry with the way in which his son had cheated some of the villagers over their cotton. These two men said that they made their confession relying on a promise from Taia and others that all would

stand by them and in the belief that by confessing the sentence would be short and that the people would look after their families during the period of their incarceration. This implication of the village Chief was made more cogent by the absence of the Chief from the village at the time the son disappeared.

The story given by the two confessing accused brought attention to the site where they said they had attacked the Chief's son. Close interrogation by the police officer of the people living in houses nearby this site disclosed that the story given by the two confessing accused could not be correct, even though the wife of the dead man was vehement against the confessing accused as well as all the elders of the village, including Taia.

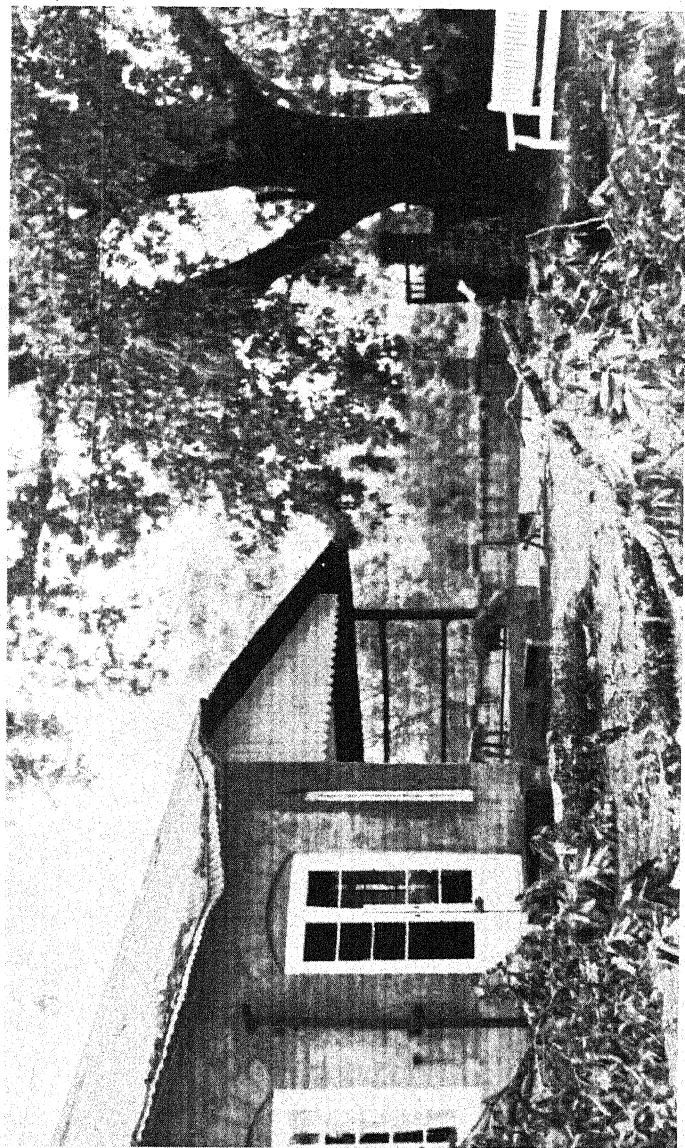
The body of the Chief's son remained unrecovered at this stage, the two confessing accused saying they had thrown it into a river and that it had gone down into a main river. There did not seem, therefore, much on which to work.

But the Superintendent marched over thirty-five miles to the village post haste and, after visiting the alleged site of the murder, commenced enquiries which continued over a period of ten days. The following story gradually emerged, supported by evidence :—

Taia had an associate among the village elders named Hanga. These two elders called a meeting of all who had been cheated over cotton by the Chief's son, at a place about a mile from the village and six days prior to the day on which the murder took place. At this meeting speeches were made stressing the wickedness of the Chief's son and Taia and Hanga in their addresses asked those present the following question : "Are the young men of to-day so soft that they cannot kill a man as in the old days ?"

This method of appeal, as was intended, proved very successful. The decision at the meeting was that the young men were as good as their forbears and would respond to any call by the elders. The elders in reply announced that they would consider the position further.

After a few days these two elders announced to one young man called Ranga that the Chief's son must die



CYCLONE, APRIL, 1942

Roof cracked in and white verandah seat hurled out 25 feet into the garden like a tuft of cotton. The large trunk lying before the door fell through the glass doors over the office table which the Superintendent had left only a few moments before, to see Colonel Critchley who was writing in the south side of the house at 11 a.m. with the help of a Petromax lamp.



Harvesting baskets.

Baskets filled by deftly
throwing cut ears over the
shoulder as step by step
reaping continues.



Through a whole field of
some acres—each head nip-
ped off by this tiny knife, a
process requiring days of dry
and hot work.

and that Ranga should call together the young men and decide on the details as to how the murder was to be perpetrated.

Not a word of all this leaked out to other quarters and not even the Chief nor the dead man's wife got to hear a word of it.

On the day chosen, a Saturday, the Chief's son's movements were carefully watched and when Ranga noticed that he was about to walk in a certain direction by a path through the village convenient for the purpose of the gang, he sent calls to the gang for immediate assembly at key points previously selected. At about 5 p.m. when the victim reached an appropriate point the gang ran out from their places of hiding, surrounded the victim, muffled his protests by gagging him, and then proceeded to club him to death with rough-hewn implements, dragging his body down to a village road to some shrubs at the end of a steep village path and bordering on the wide jungles beyond.

Taia and Hanga knowing the deed had been done at once experienced great fear. They went to a certain house and sent messengers to bring the murderers to the house where they called on them to agree to confess to the murder and to remove the dead body before villagers who were not in the know had any chance of seeing it.

The murderers flatly refused to have anything to do with the body on the ground that they had already had enough.

The elders, Taia and Hanga, tried to make Bawktea agree to be cut with a knife so that they could smear his shirt and clothes with blood in order to suggest they had all acted in self-defence against a murderous assault by the Chief's son. But all this cajoling failed. The dead body still remained. The murderers still refused to agree to confess.

But later, Taia and Hanga managed to persuade three men to remove the body under cover of darkness and to throw it over a huge precipice to fall a thousand feet and more.

(One of the three was so affected by this harrowing experience that the Superintendent found him to be unbalanced mentally as a result.)

The following morning was a Sunday and the terror of the situation was becoming more clear to the conspirators and instigators, Taia and Hanga. For hours they appealed to the young men to go down to the foot of the precipice to find where the body had fallen and to hide it in case it was discovered inadvertently by some passers-by. The young men were difficult on this matter, claiming Sunday was no day for any work and certainly not one for this kind of job. At long last some young men banded themselves together in response to a call to show TLAWMNGAIHNA (see page 114, Chapter IV) and hid the body successfully in a cave through which running water was flowing. Others who might be suspected of knowing too much were put in fear of their lives, if they dared disclose anything.

The Superintendent's police officer arrived in the village on the Tuesday, and the above sequence of events constitute the background to which he had, of course, no access. Instead, the two confessing accused, who had in the meantime been imposed upon to make a confession to the police officer duly confessed in terms described in the opening part of this account. It may be seen they sought to implicate the Chief himself and that they relied on others to speak up for them. (The reason given to the Superintendent as to why these two particular confessing accused were selected is that they were poor and had few dependents so would be cheap for the villagers to maintain while they were in prison ! !)

The above facts were disclosed bit by bit during the enquiry, but the tempo was increased by the court asking certain witnesses in the presence of the two confessing accused whether the two accused were totally and wholly to blame for the murder. When the witnesses answered in the affirmative the floodgates of abuse were let loose and the two accused fought back by saying the whole village was concerned. This change in the proceedings created a wave of doubt and uncertainty throughout all the witnesses, as each feared some betrayal by intention or by accident.

The effect of this was that on the tenth day of the enquiry by the Superintendent one witness announced under great emotion that he had been one of a party who had hidden

the dead body in a cave on a Sunday morning two weeks previously, acting on the instigation of Taia and Hanga.

On the Superintendent asking the witness if he was ready to guide the Chief and the dead man's family to the place the witness replied in the affirmative.

Within a few minutes a party was organised which recovered the body, bringing it back some two hours later in a pathetic little box.

Taia and Hanga were found guilty of abetting murder and were sentenced to death, others implicated being sentenced to various periods of imprisonment. The Appellate Court reduced the sentence on Taia and Hanga to ten years' imprisonment.

This case is interesting to show the importance of maintaining a high standard of administration within Lushai villages and of showing the resource, intrigue, and organisation of which the Lushai people are capable.

There is no doubt that had it not been for the energetic and prompt action of the Superintendent this is a crime that would have gone unsolved from the point of view of authoritative Government. Had it not been detected it is not unreasonable to suppose that there might have been positive repercussions elsewhere and some imitation of what would have become known as the successful tactics of this village's administrative oligarchy.

A CASE OF A SOPHISTICATED TEACHER WHO SOUGHT TO PROFIT BY THE IGNORANCE OF OTHERS

Plaintiff Zawnga

I am a teacher at a middle English School. It is true that my sister-in-law Zaipuii has remarried. Nevertheless, I wish to establish my claim that she committed adultery by Lushai custom in that she had sexual intercourse with some young men, before she performed the Thlahual ceremony and before she remarried.

If I succeed in proving my case it is true of course that I shall be able to recover all the price which my deceased brother paid to the parents of Zaipuii, after my brother's marriage to her and, moreover, I shall not have to pay up

the balance of Zaipuii's price, which is still due to her parents from us.

I know Zaipuii committed adultery because my kinsman Khaunga of Zaipuii's village told me so. Besides Thianga, Zaipuii's eight year old son, can well say the name of one man he saw in bed with Zaipuii and he can also say that this man possessed his mother Zaipuii on ten occasions to his knowledge.

I am sure of my case because Zaipuii confessed to the Church she had committed adultery, and she has admitted the fact to others as well.

I bring the case late as I did not know Zaipuii had committed adultery until after she had remarried, when my kinsman Khaunga told me.

Khaunga

It is true that I informed Zawnga that Zaipuii had committed adultery with Liana because Liana is a friend of mine and he told me about his experiences with Zaipuii. I told Zawnga this at the end of harvest, about mid-January. I wrote Zawnga a letter to this effect.

Court

But in the pleading it is established that Zaipuii did not marry again till the month of July and that Zwanga himself says he knew nothing about your report that Zaipuii had committed adultery till after she had remarried.

How do you account for that ?

Khaunga

I cannot say.

Court to Liana

When did you first inform Khaunga of your success with Zaipuii ?

Liana

Not till after Zaipuii had remarried, though it is true I met Zawnga out in the village in May.

Court to Zawnga

Are you definite that Khaunga did not inform you of Zaipuii's alleged adultery till after she had remarried?

Zawnga

Yes. I also must admit Liana's contention that I was out in Khaunga's village in May, before Zaipuii remarried, but I did not hear Khaunga speak of Zaipuii's adultery.

Khaunga continues

It is true that I, myself, was at the Thlahual ceremony held for the deceased husband of Zaipuii. But I cannot remember *when* it was held. Zawnga did come to my village in May.

I do not know at all why no one will say that they heard me declare Zaipuii had committed adultery with Liana before the Thlahual ceremony.

NOTE

The significance of this evidence is that if Khaunga, who had been present at the Thlahual ceremony, admitted it had been in January, then the subsequent adultery of Zaipuii would have freed her from liability, by Lushai custom. Khaunga, plaintiff's kinsman and henchman, did not wish this admission, but tried instead to 'make' the case by suggesting the adultery took place before the Thlahual. Khaunga showed his weakness here, because all knew that the Thlahual took place in January.

Court to Zawnga

Do you not realise that your claim falls to the ground unless you have witnesses to show that Zaipuii had sexual intercourse with Liana before the Thlahual ceremony?

Zawnga Teacher

She admitted she committed adultery with Liana before the Church Elders.

Court

While you may, of course, refer to Christian standards of adultery, you can only lay your claim against Zaipuii by Lushai custom, which is that Zaipuii is not culpable in this case, unless her intercourse with Liana took place before the Thlahual ceremony was performed.

COURT ORDER

Zawnga based his claim on Zaipuii committing adultery with Liana, who, however, denies having intercourse prior to the Thlahual ceremony, a claim which Zawnga, plaintiff, has failed to disprove.

Zaipuii's physical adultery with Liana is a matter between her and her Church.

Zaipuii is declared free from the charge of having committed any adultery contrary to Lushai custom.

NOTE ON THE CASE

Zawnga, plaintiff, is a teacher—and, therefore, far above his fellows—he is a typist—a suave talker—he is versed in many of the intricacies of the Scriptures. But it was Khaunga who was charged and convicted of giving unjustified and fabricated evidence, as he was the menace in the front rank of the case, though possibly, if not probably, the catspaw of clever Zawnga.

Zaipuii's eight year old son was not called to Court. However precocious he might have been, the Court was not disposed to give sanction to the idea that minors could be brought forward as experts on intimate relations ! Such evidence, if ever accepted against a mother, could open up a paying line of litigation, because its effect would be to bring ruin to the aged mother, enable the father or his family to claim for a refund of marriage price, and afford a means by which the father could pay out money for a young and new wife !

REVIVALISM AND THE PUBLIC PEACE

The case of Khulhnuna and Zomawii

Khulhnuna :—

I went to France in the last War, and so now live free of House Tax. I am on a tour with Zomawii, who has, it is true, a husband with whom she has left her small child. We have been called to spread the Gospel, though we are not operating with any sanction from the Pastor. There is no need for this. I am a normal man, and I have my own sanction.

(Khulhnuna is standing and his face is twitching—lines and sinews appearing down his neck, while his shoulders shrug and shake, and he is never still for a moment—glancing occasionally up towards the sky.)

My crops have failed this year, and, being a revivalist, I pray, wherever I go, curing some who have needed succour. I have left my wife and her child in my house.

It is not possible for me to agree to any special wishes, because my actions are governed by the Holy Spirit, and I must speak out that which enters within me.

Court

Are you aware that there are several Lushais, who have been in similar mental frame to yourself, but who are now quite insane ?

Khulhnuna

I do not know of these.

Court

Then have you no fear of punishment, or the wrath of God, for letting your mind become lost in abnormality ?

Khulhnuna

I always have fear.

Court

Then have you no fear that your mind may be taken from you, for misuse, like the others ?

Khulhnuna

I have no fear of this whatever.

(There are many onlookers, yet great silence, and all are watching every reaction, both of the man and of the Court, which is constituted by the District Officer sitting on a small cane stool while all the people stand or sit, listening and enthralled, at a reasonable distance away.)

Court

Do you realise that Government has no concern for your relationship with the Almighty, but that Government is concerned that emotional and superstitious people are not upset and demented by your antics and your claims to supernatural associations?

Khulhnuna

Yes—I understand that.

Court

Have you considered that, when you are going round the countryside with a young married woman, with a husband and a child of her own at her home, you are neglecting the woman you took as wife before God and the child which is yours?

Khulhnuna

I ask my brothers for help.

Court

Are you prepared to comply with the order of Government, directing you not to preach to all on matters on which you are not fully informed, and for which you have no sanction from any Church?

Khulhnuna

No. Because I am not my own master—I am in the hands of the 'spirit' and speak in tongues as the 'spirit' directs. It is not I who speak, but the spirits. It is not for the Government to stand in opposition to the Holy Spirit.

Court

Then you must make up your mind whether you will prefer to remain in a room in the jail, when it will matter to none if you start your trembling, talking in tongues, and general abandon, or if you will give an undertaking that you will do none of these things anywhere except within your own personal house. The only restriction Government would place on you is that you must not disturb the ordinary public. But, in the meantime, we are all feeling the cold, and you may have to-night to think over matters. If you decline to accept the offer, you must come with me, and you will be kept in jail.

Your girl friend, Zomawii, must agree to return to her husband's house or enter jail as well, in which case you will be placed in separate jails.

*Next morning**Khulhnuna*

I agree to return to my village and family, and Zomawii agrees to return to her home.

Court

Very well. The matter may now rest, but do not forget.

NOTE

If such men are permitted to go about in this loose itinerant way the same kind of affair as the KELKANG affair, described later in Chapter VIII, might well break out. The people are emotional. The kind of man engaged in claiming he is under a kind of mesmerism or spell presents a frightening and demoniacal spectacle. The Lushais are too closely associated with the beliefs described in Chapter III to be able to stand their ground unmoved under such influences.

CASE OF THE MUTILATED CHILD

Saipauva

I am the father of Mawia, who is a baby of about one year old. As my wife, SAITHUAMI, and I had to go

down to the jhum house, I left our son with my sister, Lalteii.

When we returned we found our son had met with a serious accident. My sister was not in the village. She had left the child with Nemi, explaining that she had left the little boy on the floor of the house for a short time, but that when she returned she found that he had passed stool, and that some dogs had come in and while they were eating up the stool the child's testicles had been bitten off.

My wife and I at once started off for the three days' journey to the hospital for doctor's treatment.

Saithuami

I am Saipauva's wife. As we had to go to the jhum, I left our son with my husband's sister, Lalteii. On our return we found that our baby's testicles were not where they should be, and he was in a very serious condition.

I don't believe Lalteii's story that dogs bit these off. Lalteii has a curious friendship for her brother, my husband, and she is jealous of me. Lalteii has never married. She was not at home when we returned, and did not come back till the next morning.

Lalteii

It is true that I left the baby on the floor while I went out for a short time. While I was away some dogs came in and, finding the baby passing stool, the dogs ate this and bit off the baby's testicles. I was frantic when I found what had happened. I ran to Nemi to tell her what I had discovered, and kept the baby with her. The only reason why I was not in the house when Saipauva and Saithuami returned was that I was too frightened to face them, as I had been looking after their son.

I was the first to discover the tragedy, and I informed Nemi at once.

Nemi

It was in the middle of the afternoon, when few people

were about, when Lalteii came running to me with SAIPAUA's baby son, and told me dogs had bitten off his testicles when the baby boy, left on his own, had passed stool.

I did what I could for the baby, and told his parents all about what I knew as soon as they returned.

NOTE

In the meantime, the court had called for medical evidence, which showed that the wound was an incision, and not a lacerated wound. No dog could inflict an incised wound.

On the strength of this evidence, and the unlikelihood of Lalteii's explanation, she was sentenced to four years' imprisonment, but not before SAIPAUA, her brother, had pleaded for her, informing the Court he would rather no action was taken against her, as he and she were such great friends.

It became clear also that Saipauva favoured the protection of his sister rather than the securing of justice for his wife, the mother.

The wife, Saithuami, was the Chief's sister, and the Chief denounced the attitude of Saipauva, calling on the Court to allow Saithuami her freedom from her husband.

The Court agreed with the merit of his pleading, and held that even though there could be no custom for such a case, the wife must be held to have grounds for divorce, in view of the fact that her husband cared less for a mutual tragedy than for the protection of a sister, who could perpetrate such a ghastly mutilation.

The Court believed there was some pathological association between the husband and his sister, and directed that the husband must remain responsible for the child, and must pay the full marriage price for his wife, who was to be considered as having divorced her husband, and to have full freedom of choice in the matter of ever rejoining her husband.

The child was known to be still alive three months after the tragedy.

THE TRAGEDY OF LAIHNUNI AND SAIHNUNA

In the year 1932 Saihnuna took Laihnuni happily to wife. But only after some seven months of married life trouble arose between them. The husband alleged that his wife had contracted venereal disease, a disease both rare and dreaded in Lushai. They took their case before the Chief, who would not admit that the husband had a sound case, and so ordered the husband to call back his wife in the customary manner by going to her parents with a peace offering of some thirty shillings. But the husband quite declined this direction, sticking to his statement that his wife had venereal disease, and that he was justified in having the marriage annulled by Lushai custom on terms which involved him in no liability.

The wife, in the meantime, had visited a doctor, who reported on her saying he could not trace signs of gonorrhoea, possibly because she had been douched with mercurochrome solution and no slides proved positive, he advising at the same time that both parties should again be examined over a period by the Senior Government Medical Officer.

The Court of Appeal, on hearing the case lodged by the husband against the Chief's order, rather unhappily accepted matters as they were, and assumed on the above medical report that, because no signs of gonorrhoea were found, the husband was not justified in wishing to turn out his wife. The Court, thereupon, ordered the husband to comply with the Chief's order and to call his wife back with the apology payment of thirty shillings. The man still refused to do this on any account. But he did what only too few Lushai men would have done. He openly divorced her and met the consequent obligation he thereby imposed upon himself viz. the payment to his wife's parents of the whole complete value of the agreed marriage price fixed for his bride.

There the matter ended for many years. Poor Laihnuni, now husbandless, always under the stigma of having a dread disease, lived on unhappily and unwanted. Saihnuna for his part, sought another wife—determined to stomach

the financial calamity he had suffered by having to meet the full marriage obligation in connection with Laihnuni, out of which he did not get even a child to show for his large expenditure. But Saihnuna's troubles were not ended here by any means.

Saihnuna was a Christian and a member of the new Lushai Church. This Christian body does not like divorce, no matter on what the grounds, it would seem. But Saihnuna naturally could not be expected to live a celibate life as the price of his devotion to the Christian Church. Saihnuna was quite a man above men. He had honourably divorced his wife with the full support of age-long Lushai custom, and he had paid the full price, where lesser men would have persecuted their wives, making their lives so unbearable in the homes that they would be compelled in their desperate misery to commit suicide by hanging themselves in the jungle or to brave their relations by returning to their parents' homes. This course would not be easy for a wife returning from her husband's home of her own free will, for, by Lushai custom, this would impose on her father or brother the liability of returning all her marriage price. She would then be a profitless daughter, soiled and cast aside in her parents' home with little chance of ever remarrying, depriving her parents of their expectation of legitimate marriage dues. So, poor courageous, stout-hearted, and unhappy Saihnuna was excommunicated from his Church, who refused to accept his marriage to his second wife—a marriage scrupulously correct on all counts by Saihnuna's traditional custom.

Saihnuna endured this spiritual torment for several years when, in 1940, he found his case might be considered favourably by his Lushai Church, and that he might once again be admitted fully into the Church, his second marriage duly receiving sanction.

Things began to look up for SAIHNUNA. But, alas ! This was only to lead to further trouble. In making his request to the Lushai Church for readmittance, he naturally had to show his case in the best light possible. So he gave as his reason for having divorced his first wife, Laihnuni, that there had been some doubt concerning her being

infected with gonorrhoea. Now this statement was made to the Lushai Church, sitting in a self-imposed judicial sense. But representatives conducting these judicial and strictly intimate proceedings saw fit to inform lonely and sad Laihnuni of what her erstwhile husband had said to them in his request for readmission to the Church. The balloon then went up, vertically, and with considerable flutter.

Laihnuni rushed in with a case for defamation of her character against Saihnuna on the grounds that whereas the Court had once held that she had not got gonorrhoea, he had no right to impute to her any such suggestion, even before a judicial body with no statutory sanction. After all, Laihnuni had been condemned to a life of loneliness and remoteness, though she could proudly hold she was beyond challenge, *vide* the Court's order in her favour many years earlier. Laihnuni was indeed enraged, and she was in sad case.

Finally, however, after much litigation under difficult circumstances, Laihnuni gave up her claim against SAIHNUNA because she feared she might fail before the Court if the Church members, who had passed on their electric information, denied her at the test. This might have laid her open to charges of defamation. Laihnuni also had an idea that the Court would not accept the words complained of in the restricted and precise sense which Laihnuni wished to apply to them.

Had the original Court hearing the appeal against the Chief's order in favour of LAIHNUNI taken the trouble to accept the examining doctor's clear recommendation for a precise diagnosis, the fundamental cause for all this upset would have been extinguished once and for all, and the doubts, uncertainties, and heartburnings of many years banished before they could have arisen.

NOTE ON THE CASE

This case shows the consequences of any slipshod work in the Courts when dealing with people like Lushais, and also the effects of Church influence on the natural lives of the community. The effort to keep straight with custom, and at the same time not to fall foul of the demands

of the new spiritual superstructure, is likely to impose an ever more complicated task upon the people, or, alternatively, so to simplify the issues that the spiritual superstructure will be remodelled by the Lushais to meet their needs as they see them.

THE CONFOUNDING OF ZANLINGA LUSHAI, SCHOOL TEACHER, AND HIS YOUNG BRIDE

Zanlinga married a bride on January 1st, one year, according to Christian procedure. On June 30th Zanlinga's bride gave birth to a baby which lived, and this set all tongues awagging. Here was a pretty matter. Now then, what would the mission authorities do?

Zanlinga's local churchmen brought these facts to the notice of the mission. Zanlinga claimed that the babe was a premature babe, and that by old Lushai custom all knew that such a babe could live. But many had their say in this matter. There was the mission, who employed the teacher and who paid his salary, the Lushai church elders, who sit in judgment upon morals among Lushais according to their concepts of Christianity, and there is the Mission Educational Committee.

Medical opinion was sought, and this went against the teacher, on the ground that no baby born on June 30th and conceived on January 1st or later, could possibly survive at birth. That the child having lived, it was clearly a child which had been conceived before the actual solemnising of the marriage on January 1st. Consequently, the whole power and wrath of the gods appeared to fall upon unhappy Zanlinga and his now stricken young wife.

Thus, unhappy Zanlinga, just married, a proud father, found destruction brought to his new home, a miserable destitution to his young child, and his brief glimpse of a prosperous and contented family life banished to the realms of fancy.

Zanlinga then sought the Courts in his desperate hope that his calamity could be neutralised. He persisted in his thesis that a child conceived since January 1st and born on June 30th could live as a whole child, but the Senior Government Doctor could not support his pleading.

Thus Zanlinga could not evade the charge that his child was the result of a conception prior to the date of his marriage to his wife.

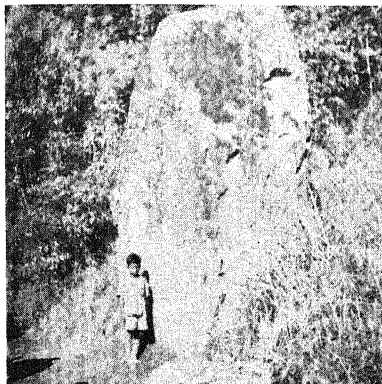
NOTE ON THE CASE

In the first case, Zanlinga had committed no fault by Lushai custom, his own traditional law. Indeed, he had been a good Lushai, in that he did marry the girl who was bearing his child, where many might not have done so. He resisted the temptation to evade his personal position in the matter by seeking some nefarious means of successfully denying any association with the child or the woman he took as wife. In collusion, some ruse might have been devised whereby the child might have been secretly done away with. By Lushai custom he had no reason even to consider such subterfuge.

So far as Zanlinga's association with the Church is concerned, the administration can have no say. But Zanlinga was a teacher. A teacher earns a monthly salary, paid for many years by the Mission. In accepting his teachership, Zanlinga implied his acceptance of Mission and Lushai Church standards. If he had not accepted such standards, his likelihood of being selected as a teacher would have greatly diminished. Removal from the post of teachership, on account of moral delinquency, as judged by the Lushai Church, implies that a teacher must behave and teach by Lushai Church standards, and not according to the traditional customs of the peoples, as desired by the administration. Zanlinga's case really demonstrates that it is incompatible with any wish of the administration to succour indigenous custom if education is entrusted to bodies actuated by counter ethics.

Had Zanlinga been a Government employee, he would never have lost his teachership. Consequent on Zanlinga's material ruination, all teachers will increasingly tend to secure their position with their employers rather than stretch themselves to comply with the policies to which the administration is committed.

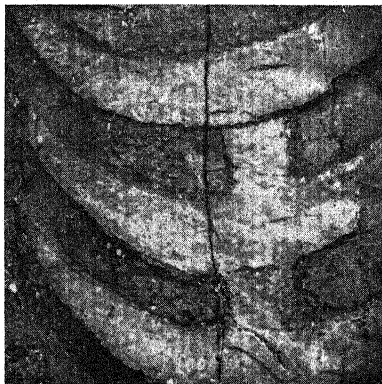
It is unlikely, and certainly undesirable, that this position should remain unaltered indefinitely.



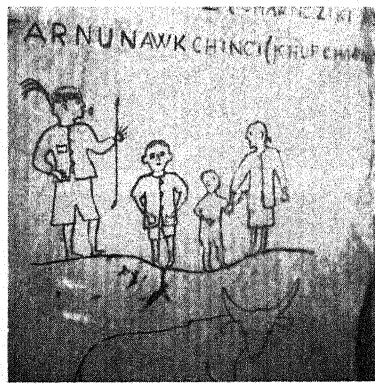
MANGKHAIA RALTE's Tomb probably pre SAIO occupation in early nineteenth century. Near Champhai.



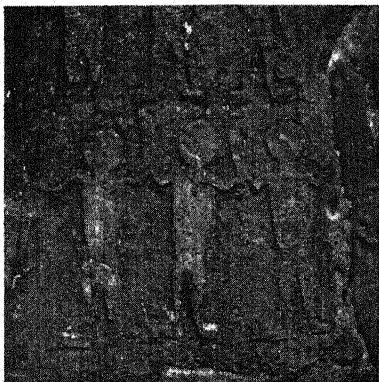
Modern grave stone, all marked free hand by a village stone worker from a small S.A. badge.



Mithan's horns on the Tomb.



Figures on the Tomb.



Modern drawing of family with Mithan below.



Over 16 feet pre-Lushai monolith—probably late Seventeen hundreds.



SHE SMOKES HER PIPE AS SHE WEAVES

FORGERY AND THE REST

Man seems possessed of the gift for putting to destruction and subversive use talents which should be productive rather of creation. The Lushai is no exception. He can fall equally well to the lure of the exotic as cling dully to the straight and narrow path in life.

At times, writers are in demand at a bed of sickness, which looks like proving fatal, and advantage is taken by schemers of the absence of the heirs to confuse a document purporting to confer property on those who by custom are entitled to no benefit. Lushai custom allows disposal in a lifetime, but wills are invalid. These facts render the task of the cheat more difficult.

Anonymous documents propagating scurrilous slanders on others are not infrequently hung up, under cover of darkness, in prominent places like the church wall, a tree, a water centre, or a grave. By this means weddings are often interfered with.

In one pathetic case, a Lushai wife sought to safeguard her precarious position with her husband by preparation of a nefarious document. She had married a husband without him paying any price for her. Thus she was quite bereft of all security in Lushai society, a fact with which he never failed to taunt her. She conceived the idea of getting round a young man, who was versed in the art of writing, and between them to produce a document which looked as though it emanated from Government.

The document eventually produced said that if the husband ever tried to get rid of his wife, the official would see that he was heavily fined. The wife treasured this, and used it with a flourish to counter her husband's taunts, hoping by this means to preserve her continuity as his wife.

This unfortunate wife's position was vulnerable, if we recall that, by Lushai custom, a man only has to say "I divorce you", and the wife must leave the house. If a large price has been paid for her, a husband thinks twice before he loses his temper to such an extent as to divorce his wife. If he has paid nothing he has nothing to lose, and the wife is indeed a poor thing, in sorry case. Thus,

the old thing sought this forged document as some security against being turned out by her husband at any moment.

Documents are also clumsily altered to make dates or money amounts more appropriate to those with evil designs, but it is improbable that manipulations ever meet with any success. But a more serious and menacing device has already met with success. A man received a telegram asking for the urgent despatch of a sum of money, the telegram being signed by the man's grown-up son, and sent from the plains in Cachar. The money was sent, and collected at the Post Office by an impersonator, who was never detected, as the Postmaster could not possibly correlate the identity of the son with the human collecting the cash. The impersonator must have been a bold and knowledgeable man with an intimate knowledge of the movements of the son of the man, who sent the money from Lushai to Cachar.

The other chief source of criminal cases that come before the Courts is theft, there being practically no violent crime or pathological menaces. Thefts are usually confined to the breaking open of baskets or boxes known to contain a family's cash savings. The people are not, widely speaking, yet keen to place sums on deposit in the post offices, yet when all is lost they will run hurriedly to the Government which they, in fact, have really distrusted, to enlist Government help towards recovery of the lost cash!! Such an attitude is paradoxical, but runs all through present-day Lushai mentality. The District Officer usually declines action because the system of administration is based on non-interference in village affairs, except when breaches of the peace are concerned, rape, or murders. It is for local village society to purge itself. Remove responsibility for this from the people, and a composite village communal system will become a disintegrated mass of helpless individuals, floundering in a morass of universal insecurity, occasioned by the inability of Society to maintain any police or administrative services, such as those which constitute a stronghold for us all in the west.

Any criminal offence, not taken as specially serious, is tried by village Chiefs or Courts by Lushai custom. Awards

in the few other cases are by the Indian Penal Code, and involve sentences of fines, imprisonment, or whippings, of which there have been but five on all counts in the last decade of Lushai affairs.

Sometimes Courts are faced with petitions, sometimes confusing, sometimes funny, often both. Here is one example of an English translation of a petition in Lushai prepared in English for the assistance of an Officer, who did not know the Lushai language.

Kindly consider my Petition :—

Nuii is my sister to whom I gave a Mithan on her marriage day as dowry for her.

I wanted to take it back before it was one year and during that time the calf of the Mithan paid by me nearly became grown up.

This young Mithan was regarded to be the gain or profit. But the gain or profit was dead along with its mother Mithan, after I have taken the mother Mithan back with me.

The young calf was dead in the year I gave its mother to my sister as her dowry.

Now ! Sir ! Do a Mithan give birth twice during a year's time ? Why did the Elders give the Mithan which belonged to me to her ?

The Mithan which I gave to her as dowry brought up its calf which they called the "gain of the dowry". The gain was dead when it was in its mother's stomach before it was formed along with its mother.

CHUANGA.

9.2.1939.

The reader, no doubt, quite understands the position which has galvanised poor Chuanga into this utterance.

These few specimens of Lushai litigation will disclose the type of litigant encountered. They will suggest the level of the ordinary mind, the simplicity of outlook and contact which is coupled to a deep potential *naivete*. A surface crudity is apt to deny the sensitiveness and the emotional propensities of the Lushai make-up. The lack

of violent crime pays tribute to the prevalence of sound sense. The Lushai is indeed a very human soul.

It is not usual for emotion to be displayed in Court. Faces are inclined to be sphinx-like. When the case seems to be turning against one party, apparent calm may change to animation, especially when women's evidence is concerned. On leaving the Court the floodgates of pater and abuse, however, are not infrequently let loose. The natural ability of the people to stress a legal weakness discloses the precision of the Lushai mind. But, to their credit, it may be said that Lushai litigants usually concentrate on the broad issues, and they will not drag out litigation by contesting the insignificant details of every possible issue.

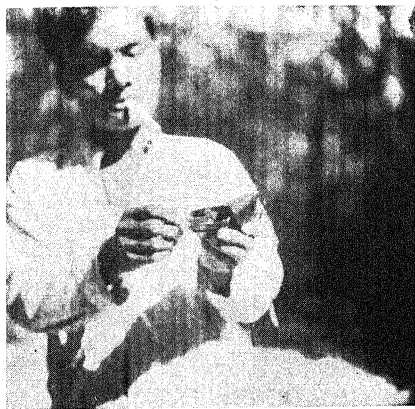
This is in contrast to the Pawis, in their litigation, who may press for the clear definition of the size of the hen to be delivered, the place, the manner of giving, the supervision, and almost every imaginable detail of the decreed transaction. Yet the Pawis have their strong points, brave and most industrious as they are. All sorts go to make up the World of Lushai Land !



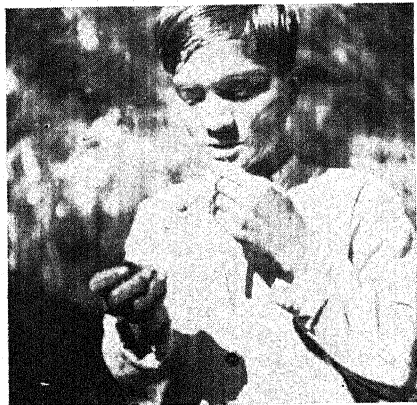
Rolling the Tobacco to make a cigarette.



Nice work !



Flint raises a spark which catches on soft fluffy tow which smoulders, but is closed in again when the lid of the box is put on again.

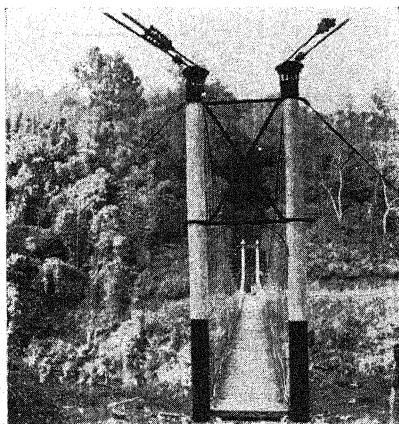
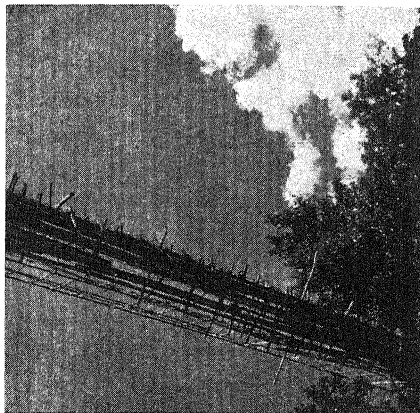


The light.



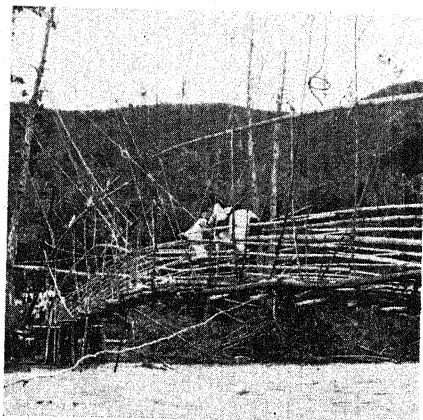
Good enough ! Holder complete.

Lushai Bridge seen from below



A Public Works Department
Bridge over the TUIRIAL.

Pony crossing cleverly improvised
Lushai bridge flung across
on a river in flood.



CHAPTER VII

INDIGENOUS MODE OF LIVING

IN this chapter we must refer generally more to the past, for this book is being written at a time when the swing away from the old, in favour of Christianity and new contacts, has acquired considerable momentum. To write wholly of the present would be to give a false impression. Some results of these influences on this indigenous mode of life are discussed in the next chapter.

The Lushais have certainly advanced far beyond that stage in which man sustained himself from natural vegetation, as he found it. Though no permanent settlements have ever existed, indigenous vegetation has been compelled to give way that concentrated food crops should be grown. The Lushais have explored with intelligence the economic potential of their land, which is visible from their ingenious utilisation of cane, bamboo, leaves, herbs, and other accessories for their needs. But their nomadic instinct has so far undoubtedly militated against any permanent or lasting evidence of their civilisation. In a land of rock, there is no trace of any Lushai creation, with the exception of large rectangular, roughly fashioned monoliths, inscribed with crude markings. The main purpose of this chapter is to gain some insight into the principal features of the active life of the people, their methods of agriculture, medical practice, arts and crafts, music or games, food and cooking, and general points of some interest.

LIVES OF THE PEOPLE

The Lushais were always very particular about their place of residence, and considerable thought was spent on the subject of the village site. The highest hill top started as favourite, and the site subsequently chosen would be that which constituted the most impregnable stronghold, combined with the hope of a good water supply, which would not dry up in the hot weather. Before final selection,

the elders would sleep the night at the site, taking with them a cock. If it did not crow like a good lusty cock should one hour before dawn, it was taken as a bad omen.

The houses were laid out close to each other with some sense of regularity, arranged usually in two lines, the fronts of the houses all facing in towards each other, and separated by a space treated as a village street. In olden days, as many as one thousand houses might be collected under one Chief. Villages would move regularly to new pastures, perhaps every fourth year or so. Perhaps a rising Chief might spread his dominion so far as to embarrass a less resolute neighbour, who would then be compelled to move further afield, as cultivation would otherwise be attended with unbearable risks. Wars, even, could be caused by petty indiscretions. In 1874, one serious war was caused by a Chief raiding another and taking off a brass bowl and an earthenware pot, which happened to have been earmarked as part of the marriage price of a certain Chief's daughter. To regain these articles, the parties had resort to war. Again, if a son was born to a Chief it constituted just cause for slaying some neighbour in token of which red goat's hair would be worn later by the son. This could well give rise to war. But, even so, such wars were not waged in violent open battle line, amid the clanging of shining steel claymores, or in the form of life and death duels between valiant knights. They rather took the form of secret ambushes aimed at unsuspecting victims engaged in the ordinary daily round and common task.

Epidemics caused by unhygienic treatment of the water supply, animal and human refuse, or treatment of the dead, one or all, might give rise to a loss of public confidence in the site. Also land within easy and safe range of cultivation might give out, and this would surely necessitate a move.

When a village was moved for some such reason, the hearths of the old village were never carried over to the new village. Indeed, hearths of the old village would be extinguished on hearing that the hearths in the new village had been lighted up. The old hearths would be damped with water to make certain that none of the disabilities of the abandoned site should venture further afield.

The houses were, and are, strongly built, as indeed they need to be in the face of crashing cyclones, which lay flat stone buildings, as they devastate the open plains of Bengal. The framework is of rough-hewn timber uprights, supporting sides of split bamboo, and roofs of the same material or thatch grass. There are usually no partitions, the parents' and children's bed-platforms being either side of a central hearth. There used to be no windows, the only openings being the front and back doors. Only those who had performed the great Khuangchawi ceremony dare make windows, and so great was the fear of ill-luck to all the village, in the case of abuse by any one member, that this rule was very jealously enforced. With the spread of Christianity, the need for the Khuangchawi ceremony is fast disappearing, and the ban on windows with it.

The floors were of split bamboo, plaited together, the whole resting on uprights, and being some few feet above ground level. Each house had a front portico, from which rough timber steps served as an approach to the ground level. Skulls and tokens of the hunt would rest on the outer walls of this portico, and the rice mortar, fowls, wood stocks, and other knick-knacks, would also be stored here, due regard being had to dangers from the prowling civet cat, or other unwelcome vermin.

The one main and absorbing need of all people living in the Lushai Hills is to wrest from their lands sufficient rice, or perhaps maize, or both, to sustain the family adequately for one year. There is a distinct division of labour as between man and his womenfolk, and habits are subordinate to the seasonal needs of cultivation. The form of cultivation is known as Jhuming, and comprises various stages. There is the original cutting down of bamboo or tree jungle, its burning, the sowing of seeds, weeding, and eventual harvesting.

The clearing of expansive hill-sides by cutting down the jungle and the forest is a heavy task, when it is realised that a Lushai householder may have to clear by himself several acres of land, with implements that can lay no claim to being efficient. The cutting is usually done by the men in January and February, the cold season of the year,

though in recent years the idea has caught on that if jungle is cut in October the subsequent crop yield is increased.

After some weeks, by the end of March or in April, if rains do not fall and permeate the fallen timber or bamboo with damp, it is usual to fire the cleared hill-side. The selection of the day for burning is a matter of considerable skill. If a day is chosen before the fellings have got thoroughly dry in the March heat, firing will not result in a well-burned field. If rain intervenes before a day can be fixed the whole firing is seriously held up perhaps for three weeks or a month, and if, as had happened before now, it proves impossible to dry the fellings, before early monsoon or unseasonable rains, a serious crop shortage can easily result. If conditions are favourable, the early summer heat will parch the stricken forest and result in a slashing and vigorous fire. Indeed, when burning takes place under suspicious circumstances, the fire rushes up into swishing tongues of abandoned flames, drunk on the ease of their success. All the male villagers turn out with sticks and knives to guard the fire-lines so that uncut forest may escape mutilation. The Lushais in this, as in many other respects, deserve commendation for their good sense in genuinely seeking to avoid unnecessary damage to what is their very life-blood.

In May, the villagers, male and female, turn out to sow the rice seeds up and down the hill-sides, choosing a period when rain is imminent or falling. The sowing is by a crude process. Little holes are scooped out with a Lushai hoe every eighteen inches or so, in no special shape, seven or more grains of rice being dibbled into one before moving on to sow another. The holes are not filled up. The end is desired with the minimum of labour. Provided there is rain, germination will commence five or six days after sowing. If seeds are sown in dry weather, in dry earth, unfriendly winds may sweep them away, or rats or birds may peck them out before germination. But, unless some specific and obvious danger happens to exist, germination is rather left to look after itself.

Between June and October, fields of growing rice are conscientiously weeded three or four times, so that hostile

weeds will not choke the growing shoots. Weeding is hard, back-aching, work. The women figure predominantly in this arduous but essential need. Days on end are spent bending down snipping out threatening weeds with a small Lushai hoe, until the whole hill-sides are fairly well cleared. Risks of snake bite have to be taken; exhaustion and fever may even take their toll.

November ! December ! the joyous and magic season of reaping, the reaping after months of Nature's vagaries. There may have been droughts strangling the growth of the rice ears, insects eating secretly at the roots of the shoots, untimely winds, which can lay fields of promising rice in low futility, an easy prey to covetous rats. In 1911 the rats came as a plague with the seeding of the bamboos, and it cost the Government no less a sum than £20,000—to help to keep the people going, six times the total annual yield from the tax on houses. Before British rule was established vast numbers of Lushais died from starvation in the eighteen sixties and eighties. In 1929, however, the danger was anticipated, and the ultimate loss to the Government did not exceed one thousand pounds due to the co-operation and industry of the people in repaying loans taken in their distress.

Every phase of cultivation has to be tackled by hand. There are no reaping, or threshing, machines. Reaping is carried out by one, two, or more, of the family working together in slow rhythm through the field, snipping off the ears with a small hand-knife and deftly tossing the rice over their shoulders, when it falls into a basket on their backs. But harvest time is a happy time. SAHNUNA FANAI, Chief, who is one of Lushai's most foremost poets, has composed a harvest song which reads in English something like this :—

“ Our corn tops begin to shine
This brings comfort to our people
Our long expected blessings
Like springs in drought do come
I'll call for blessings from RIHLIPUI
And also from CHAMPHAI
Like thick clouds in the sky
My threshing floor to make.

Our day for joy has come
From the threshing floors of all the land
We shout FANGRAWNING for blessings
Turbans fly in the air
How beautiful are the ZAMZO
LIANTUAI—I—THLIAH
And leaves at the track fork
Put for our girls by us.

Clear off yon clouds of the sky
And yonder mist over the valley.
I long to view the young folks
Working in those distant fields.
I love to see the shining crops
And merry making reapers,
Reaping together all joyful,
Like the merry flocks of ZARVA."

In verse number one the reference to RIHLIPUI and CHAMPHAI recalls the old Lushai belief that the rice of gods used to lie in the RIH LAKE of Burma and the plains of CHAMPHAI, while the term FANGRAWNG, in the middle verse, is the old language used for incantations to these gods at threshing time, the supplication meaning "May rice come forth! May rice come forth!"

The word ZAMZO means the crimson amaranthus flower, the legend of which was recounted in Chapter I, and LIANTUA-I-THLIAH is the name for another flower of the amaranthus family. When leaves are put at the junction of a fork of two paths, it may be a sign from a lover in front to one behind, or it may serve as a huntsman's message.

The term ZARVA, in the last verse, is the name of those birds which frequent the ripening fields—birds which the Lushais claim must have been a party of laughter-making harvesters, who have been turned into little chattering birds.

When there is cultivation work to be done by him, a Lushai man has a full day. After a morning meal of rice to serve as breakfast, he will go off to his particular hill-side, which may be as far away as seven or eight miles, and he will not get back to his house till about dusk, after a climb up of perhaps fifteen hundred feet. On his way back from his cultivation a keen man will bring something back with him, some useful length of tree, suitable for house repair

or for cutting up into firewood. On his arrival home, he will dive into a meal of rice, with tasty spices, such as chillies, salt, or ginger, and, if there is any, some pig's flesh, which may have been kept in solidified fat for several months. A married man will then sit in his house puffing at his comfortable pipe, the darkness only relieved by the flickering of the flames in the open hearth. If he is not too physically tired, and is skilful at cane work, he may even add a little to whatever work he has in the process of making. But young men are more likely to drift off towards the charms of the belles to whom they happen to be paying court. It is exceptional for any young man to do any serious work after his evening meal.

The Lushai is emotional temperamentally, and possesses the virtues as well as the vices of his qualities. If he is subject at times to disillusion, he is also capable of emotional enthusiasm. Here is a love poem :—

I look around yet find no one like you.
You are my joy and my beloved one.
When you are not with me at my side
The day seems far too long.

I love you and need you at all times.
Without you, Sweet-heart,
I am like the leaves of a broken branch.
Your face is like the Orchid flower.
My love can never cease.

When in pensive mood I feel sad and lone,
I long for someone to console me.
The dawning of the autumn day
Makes me feel love lorn.

Bring me consolation, beloved friends.
Words fail me to say all I feel.
Sadly on my bed I lie down
In my little lone dwelling on piles.

I wish I had speech with the celestial birds,
For I feel so lonely all through the day,
I need the DOVE that will call me,
The one whom I love.

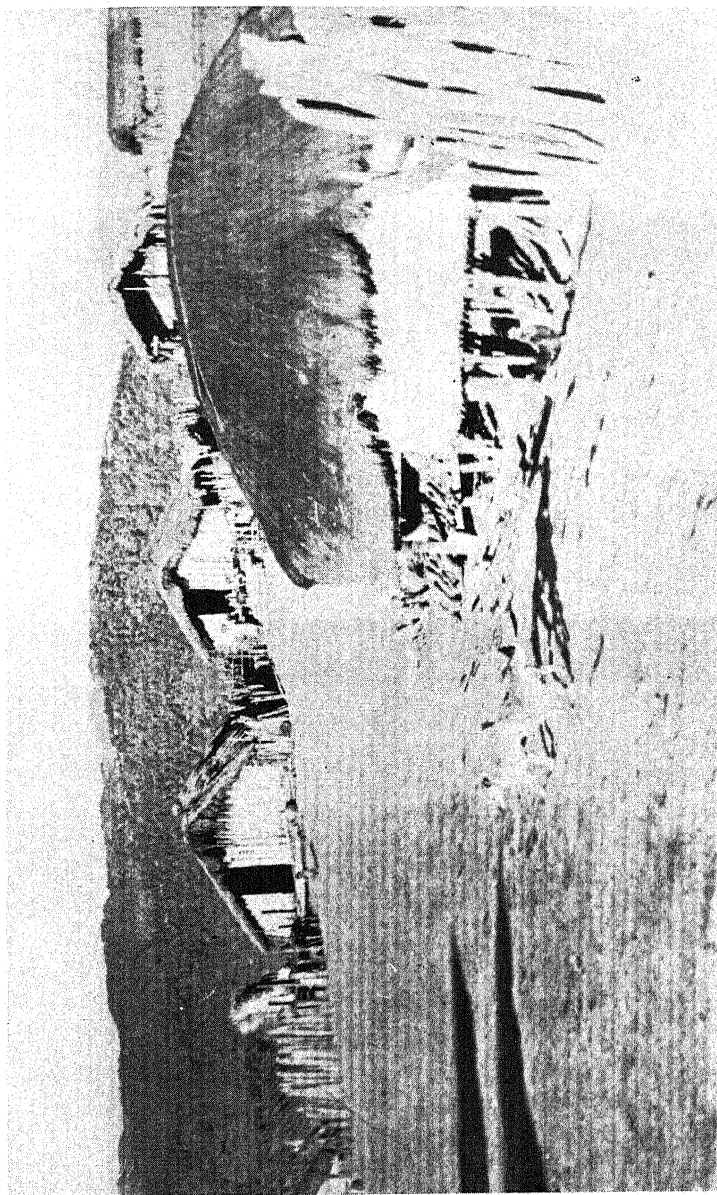
A Lushai woman is always very hard-working, has much

hard work to do, and has all too little time available for any profitable leisure. This state is even more definite during the times when the jhums demand attention. Lushai women, though taking no part in the actual felling of the jhums, have plenty to do in this season of February and early March. There is the harvest rice to collect from the fields and to store in the bins of circular bamboo-plaited frames, constructed at some convenient place between the fields and the homes on the hill-tops. This rice storing is a heavy task, as each load has to be carried from the field to the storing-bin on the women's backs. From these storing-bins the women carry up through the year load after load to meet the needs of the family's daily consumption in the homes. The loaded baskets are steadied on the backs and held up by a plaited bandeau pressing against the foreheads of the women. Thefts of stored paddy are extremely rare, it being a rigid custom that stealing simply is not done.

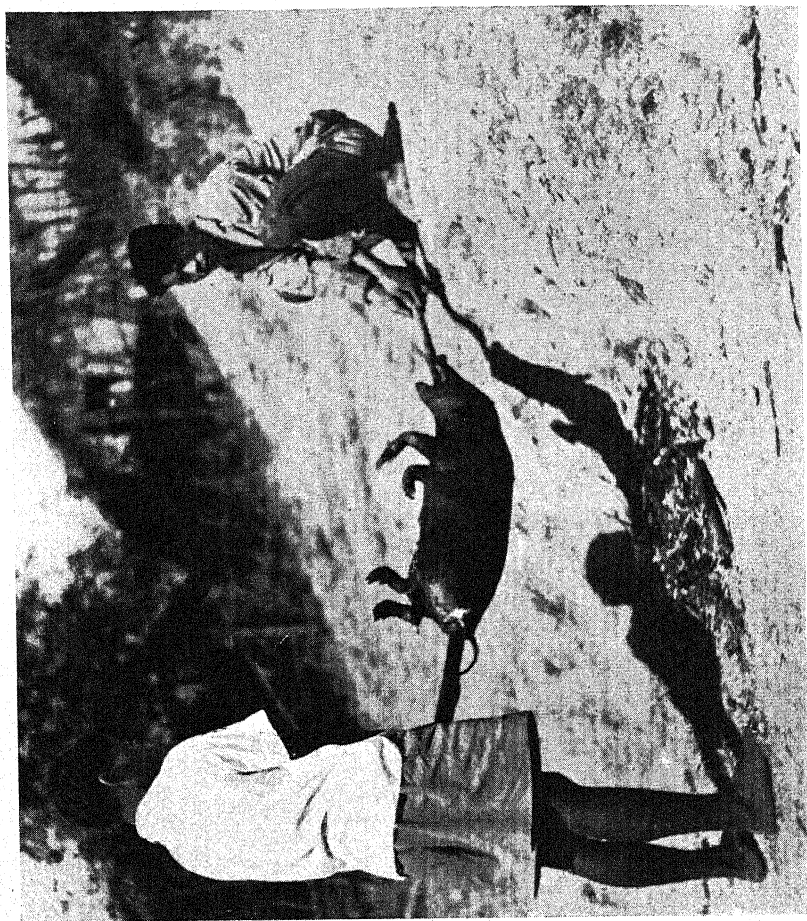
At this time of year the women like to take advantage of the dry weather to prepare their cotton harvested in December or January by ginning, teasing, spinning and making skeins for easy use at some convenient occasion in the future.

The really industrious women will also use this season for the cutting of firewood, its portorage to the house, and its stacking, for use at a later date during the rains, when its collection would be less profitable.

Women figure prominently in the routine of cultivation, by their part in the sowing of the seeds, the three or four seasonal weedings, and the harvesting. Women rise at dawn, while the men sleep on, and, coaxing up the fire, they start to husk the rice, already dried overnight, it having been left on the shelf over the fire-place. Even before dawn the Lushai village reverberates with the squawking of the fowls, the dull thudding of the pestles, as the women rhythmically pound the rice in the wooden, hand-fashioned mortars. As soon as the supply of rice for the first part of the day has thus been secured and the cooking is well on its way, the women, after waking up their menfolk to watch the progress of the cooking, will make their way



EVENING TIME
with the Zawlbuk in the foreground and its humped roof, unlike all other houses.



HOW LUSHAI DEALS WITH
A PIG IN THE ABSENCE OF
A SPTT

down to the water supply to fill their several bamboo tubes with water. In the hot weather, when the water springs often go dry, this venture not infrequently gives rise to squabbling, for there are many bamboo tubes but all too little water. Breakfast is eaten at about eight in the morning, and the women clean up, or, in some cases, do not clean up the utensils !! In the cultivation seasons the women will go off for the day to their fields, often taking their babies on their backs, if they have none with whom to leave them safely. At other times they will go out for two hours' wood cutting, or will sit down on their verandas and take up the weaving of some cloth already in a partial state of completion, and lying folded on the loom.

If the family is to be in at midday there will be a good meal, otherwise cooked rice, folded in a banana leaf, or in some other convenient way, will be taken out for a picnic meal during the day. After return from the day's outing the women will have to set to work to make up an evening meal, usually taken at about six o'clock. This may even involve the husking of more rice. Before sundown the important function of feeding the pigs will have to be performed, the fowls will have to be caught and put away into their baskets of neatly fashioned bamboo, and these will then be hung up or placed high up on appropriate shelves, far out of reach, it is hoped, of civet cats or other prowling vermin.

When Lushai women are not actively employed on any of these vital and necessary duties there are still children of varying ages, together with the continual need to produce clothes for the entire family. It is not at all unusual to see mothers, who are pregnant, still having to feed their latest offspring at the breast. To help a burdened mother, a daughter of seven or eight, however, can often be seen with a cloth strapped around her shoulders, in which a few days' old baby may be being joggled around. Unsuitable feeding, spartan childcraft, and health disorders, often result in profuse crying by the younger children. But Lushai mothers, though busy with their hard and ceaseless duties, evince a patience and serenity towards

these mites which induce feelings of compassion and sympathy for them in their simple quiet courage.

A cradle song by a Lushai poet offers an insight into a Lushai mother's heart.

"Smile sweetly, my baby, and play Tum-bai-lek, Tum-bai-lek.
I'll do LALCHAWNG-DIT, and hold you up in my outstretched arms.

Try to stand up and earn your egg.
Grow up and be the comfort always of your parents.

"I'll play DAI-AW-SU-LEP-LEP in this home of mine with you.
I'll drop you either on the TUIPUI or TUIITE,
Make your choice and your parents can give.
Chose Tui Pui we say for there are stones in Tuite.

"Sleep on, my beloved baby, and never never cry.
Upon my back with cloth will I sing you to sleep.
Play away in this pile home of ours,
And grow up your friends to out-fame in your life."

TUM-BAI-LEK is one of the first lessons for baby, the mother teaching it to open and close its tiny fists. LAICHAWNG-DIT is the name given to the habit among mothers of squeezing the child's navel and again relaxing it. DAI-AW-SU-LEP-LEP is the name given to the game, when an adult lies on his back with his knees bent, while the child sits on the upper part of the foot. The adult straightens out his legs from time to time till he feels tired, and tells the little one to choose on which side he shall be put down.

In actual practice, however, the division of labour, certainly under present-day conditions, is so much against the women, that they can rarely claim any leisure at all. Then there is the arduous hazard of child-birth which these great women face cheerfully and courageously.

In delivery cases in the village an ordinary Lushai woman will be assisted primarily by some elder, one who has some claim to experience in such matters, preferably one belonging to the family. The mother suffers to the full with only Nature's clemency upon which to rely. Kneeling on her bed, gripping something or anything, sometimes leaning on some kindly friend, she stoically attempts to follow well-meant instructions to heave and to urge on

delivery. This tragic, but elated, little figure and her friends strive behind the simple curtain, which is their only privacy from those who remain anxious and subdued around the flickering hearth. At length, if all goes well, without any assistance, the child is born when the experienced helper will take charge of it and help, or give directions to others to help, the wearied mother. The umbilical cord is crudely severed by means of a sharpened bamboo after the cord has been properly secured by cotton. The baby is washed and wrapped up in an old cloth, when it is put gently down beside the mother, who will be lying, covered by the family's large bed-blanket of unspun and tufted cotton.

This woman helper examines the mother to see if there is to be any further discharge, and if she suspects this to be the case she catches hold of the mother, as if to make her stand up, which is usually found to be enough to bring about what is needed. After the birth of the child the mother is given rice-water to drink. Perhaps she may faint, or be near fainting, when she would be given some mild Zufang, or rice beer, slightly warmed to help to revive her. The Lushais also believe that this Zu helps to alleviate the mother's pain, and she is encouraged to smoke tobacco as a sedative.

Except on the day of actual delivery, the mother looks after her newly-born herself, washing both herself and the babe. She does not willingly rest, even on account of her delivery, and goes about her ordinary household duties the very day after her delivery, unless perchance she is in serious pain.

There is much which can be done to help to alleviate the ordeal these women have to suffer. Country or out-district dispensaries, under itinerating Lushai doctors, could afford a measure of ante-natal advice and care, and advice concerning food before, and after, child-birth. The Lushai mother will continue to work at her usual duties, even wood and water collection, up to the very day of delivery, there still being a sneaking belief that in this way the chances of a speedy delivery are greatly enhanced. The Lushai Hills District Red Cross Committee has already

done very wonderful work in this respect, placing trained nurses, to replace untutored midwives, in district villages, and publishing abbreviated booklets on the feeding and care of prospective mothers and newly-born babies, arranged appropriately to take count of conditions in Lushai Land. Except for these efforts and the great individual work being done by the medical authorities and the missions, chiefly at headquarters, conditions of delivery in the out-villages remain much the same as they were before the Government came to Lushai.

There was not so long ago a case, where a mother was about to deliver her child, though she was alone in the house. She had sent word to some friends, but they delayed coming till they had finished the evening meal, which they were taking. By the time they appeared the child had been born, and they arrived in time to take charge of it, the mother being at her ordinary work the next day. On the other hand, there are the tragedies, too ghastly to contemplate or to describe. But with ever-widening sophistication, alleviation should follow. The people are so resigned to complications, consequent on irregular treatment at and after deliveries, that there are still many who give no higher recognition to nurses trained in the elements of antiseptic handling and hygiene than to the old die-hard village midwives.

Cases of abortion among unmarried women have always been very rare, and methods, on the whole crude, resort sometimes being had by the mother herself to violence, in order that the unborn child should perish. As a result of contacts with other civilisations, some have prescribed quinine as means for procuring abortion, but the record of successful treatments does not seem to be impressive. The trend is, however, away from any increase in abortion, for two simple reasons. In the first place, with the exception of a Chief's illegitimate child, there is no special loss of status or stigma against the child or mother socially, in the eyes of the ordinary people, and, secondly, there is the realisation that the Government might mete out severe punishment in such matters, which might well be more calamitous than letting Nature take her normal course.

Infanticide has always been more common. On one occasion the Christian daughter of a Christian Chief was convicted of causing the death of her new-born child, and was imprisoned in the district jail. Before the British Government took over the Lushai Hills, infanticide was not considered specially culpable, which is most curious, in view of the underlying urge always to increase the strength of the community.

If the women of Lushai are industrious and hard working, their men-folk are less indolent than is sometimes imagined. When a man's larder depends much on the sweat of his brow, his house on his ability to extract his needs from Nature's jungles, and his ability to put this to profitable use, and when the financial liability to his Government involves the exchange of his produce in a poor agricultural country into cash—a very rare commodity—energy, courage, and fortitude are all indeed very essential. These vital needs are mostly secured in the cold season. Cash to meet the Government annual house tax of three shillings has to be sought, and this may involve an absence of many days from home, on some of which a man may have to carry heavy loads to earn a cash wage. In addition to his personal obligations, a Lushai also has to meet unavoidable Government demands for his labour on payment, while in accordance with age-long custom he also has to work free on village roads and on the construction of the Chief's house when necessary. There is the ZAWLBUK, or bachelors' barrack, the church, and the school, all of which have to be maintained free by the villagers.

In fact, after close contact with people living in Lushai villages, it can safely be said that if the people are found enjoying a little leisure or basking in relaxation in the sun, the stresses and strains to which their bodies have been set fully justify such a human privilege. The only criticism which the west can fairly make is that the men, who have been relieved of much of their indigenous and traditional tasks, have not adequately taken away from their women some of their tasks, as they should have done, in view of the increased demands made by life upon the women, under the more settled conditions of to-day.

REFLECTIONS ON INDIGENOUS MEDICAL SCIENCE

Lushai has an old saying that only those who could not die at infancy ever attained maturity. Such conditions made for supermen like the Spartans, who qualified for life at their very birth, almost in the face of death. Nevertheless, there was always a need for measures which might ease pain and disease. The hope of cures or treatment lay in the propitiation of the interested spirits, whoever they happened to be. But a sense that there was more hope for those who helped themselves was manifest in the application of treatments combined with sacrifices and incantations, as advised by the village PUITHIAM, or priest. Such treatments varied in different parts of the hills, among different peoples, and we cannot generalise.

In some cases there was a distinct relationship between Lushai treatments and modern pharmacology, as is evidenced by the use of jungle plants on wounds and sores. Dysentery, goitre, eye diseases, worms, skin sores, fever, stomach pains, rheumatism, diarrhoea, cholera, and respiratory diseases, were all recognised by the Lushais. Salts from certain areas, like the PILER HILL, east of the TUICHANG river, were known to be beneficial, when taken in small quantities, either with or without food. Salt was also used externally on burns. Hot ginger, soda, and water, were used for colds and stomach relief. But for the most part cures were very exotic, viewed by modern standards. To record all that is known of the people's use of their indigenous resources for diseases and ailments would be to strain the reader's patience, but some of the more peculiar practices may be of interest.

In the case of eye defects, a boiled egg would be placed in a receptacle for pig's food, and the patient would have to eat it, kneeling in a position of all fours. Fever was variably treated. The bile of a wild boar mixed with water served as one medicine, while drinking a cup of cow's urine was another. Though meat is usually considered unsuitable in fever cases, the Lushais recognised monkey's flesh and that of water turtle as appropriate feeding, possibly due

to their great tastiness at a time when appetites would naturally be jaded. The fat of the hornbill was used for external application in the case of respiratory diseases which was reasonable, in view of the large oil and fat content. Massage with the application of the fats of the python, tiger, or bear, was popular for rheumatism, as well as the wearing of the bones of a hooluk monkey over the aching joints. Drinking of the bile of python was used for diarrhoea or cholera cases. Many jungle creepers, lilies, or leaves, dried or powdered, were used as supplementary cures, either internally or externally, especially in the case of blackwater fever when the vitex pedunculous was, and still is, a very effective cure. The leaves were used to make a decoction, and this was taken at frequent intervals. There is, in fact, much interesting ground for a close examination of local growths as regards their efficacy as sources for modern medicines.

A better insight, however, into the mind of the Lushai concerning diseases and their treatment may be afforded by an examination of their outlook on tuberculosis. The Lushai seems to have recognised the existence of such a disease, although he may have been mistaking it for chronic bronchitis.

This disease was closely associated with the power of a spirit, or a wizard, with evil designs upon his victim. It could well be hereditary, in the case of families of which some member had committed a serious anti-social crime like theft, unusual cruelty, or the fouling of a village spring. The disease was not considered contagious or infectious in the ordinary course of affairs. But at death special precautions were recognised as being essential. At this dangerous time members of the afflicted family might well be set upon by the spirit of the disease on its exit through the crown of the dead person's head, and thence on its way upwards and out through the hole, which had to be specially cut in the roof. It was on this account that others outside the family would be encouraged to nurse the patient in the last throes of the disease.

Though cures were attempted, all recognised that success was bound to be very problematical. If death occurred,

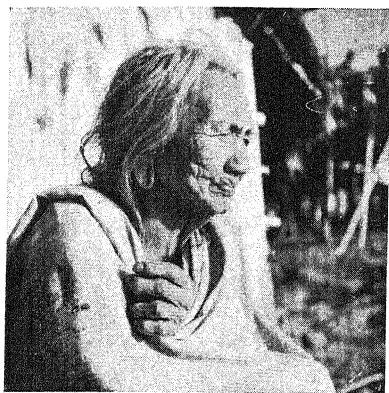
and the body showed very advanced symptoms, all work was stopped for a whole day by the whole village, to help propitiate the spirits. If a person with a birthmark happened to fall ill of this dread disease all hopes for a cure would be abandoned at once.

Cures were attempted by performance of sacrifices. But it was by no means a simple or a cheap adventure. It was not even easy to produce a priest, because it was widely believed that if the priest failed to effect a cure, he might, and probably would, fall a victim to the disease, as failure to effect a cure would have disclosed his inability to overcome the particular evil spirit at the root of the disease, and after such an unsuccessful challenge he was certain of death.

If a sufferer could show acceptable grounds for belief that his disease was due to some wizardry by another, the Chief might well sanction the wizard's death. The sufferer would then wait his day, time, and place and possibly, without any warning, would fall upon his enemy and kill him. He would then hack out the dead man's liver and gorge upon his blood, thus seeking a cure which was believed to be infallible. Alleviation of pain was sought, and found, by the drinking of dog's blood, which could well have been temporarily effective, due to the iron content. The actual details of sacrifices made to overcome tuberculosis were almost unobtainable because if a priest was successful, he would refuse any offers made to him to disclose the source of his power, knowing that disclosure might involve his supercession. An account, however, of one secret form of sacrifice, which has come to light, is as follows.

The patient puts the tail of an owl in his hair and a tiger tooth round his neck, while the priest does the same with an eagle's tail. The patient takes up his position near the door, and the priest at this stage assumes a fierce appearance, strutting down through the house from the far end, carrying the necessities for the sacrifice. It is hoped by this procedure to drive away the spirit of evil hovering around the house. When the priest comes up to the patient all drink rice beer, three cups apiece, a useful

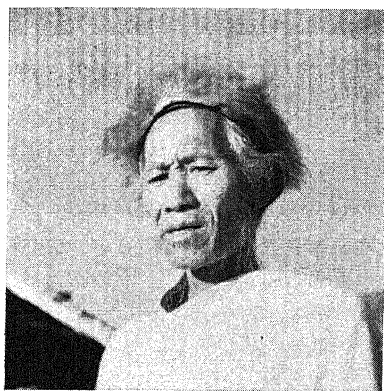
PLATE XXXIII
SOME LUSHAI TYPES



What couldn't she tell?



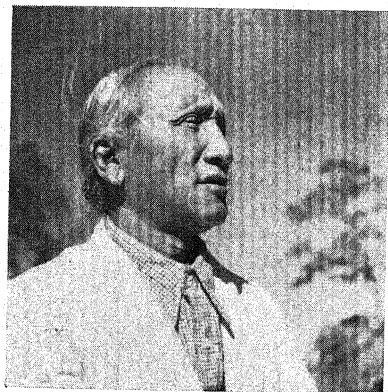
The Wise man.



Hunter with a reputation and
a monkey fur skull cap!



DARCHHUNGPUH
Able and Charming Chieftainess.



PU LALLUAIA SAILO, Chief of REIEK
holder of British Empire Medal



The Lushai Jemadar Sahib



LALZUALA SAILO CHIEF OF BAKTAWNG

innovation, helping to galvanise into reality the whole sad proceedings. After this, the priest departs from the company for a little, leaving the patient to sit on all the sacrificial accessories in turn. While this is proceeding none may leave the house to go out into the streets. When the priest is ready he blows the horns of a domestic bison and a goat, whereon helpers come forward, carrying a pig and a dog, while the priest chants incantations. Having visited each of the four corners of the house with this procession, the priest sounds an alarm for the purpose of driving off any enemies, and the whole company then take to the very roof of the house in the open air. At this stage the animals are killed, and the patient then drinks a mixture of rice beer, turmeric, and blood of the dog.

Two holes are dug in the courtyard of the house, so that a certain kind of fig tree may be planted in each hole. Two figures are then moulded in clay, the one clad luxuriously in the customary head-dress of the brave to represent the patient, the other representing the instigator of the disease, ridiculous, with a hen feather in its head and a piece of dog's lung pushed into its mouth. The priest then makes the clay figures jump about like dancers, amid eerie incantations, till he causes the figure representing the patient to knock over the other, amid an unrestrained roar of triumph. Now is the time for the planting of the trees, and challenging dances, which continue till the priest believes the time is nigh for roping round the whole house and for placing over the entrance of the house a bundle of reeds, as dread signal that the house is observing homage to fate and the spirit. Near the door is also placed the head of the dead dog on the top of a pole. Should any really ignorant, or naively careless, person 'Gate Crash' into this revered house, he will be made to pay the whole financial cost of the proceedings, amounting to the value of at least thirty shillings in local currency of coin or kind, or perhaps as much as £6. The ensuing days are anxious, and, if within three days there is no sign of improvement, despair will surely fall upon the inmates. Much has been spent, but apparently to no purpose. The erstwhile, almost celestial, priest will be dogged by frenzied terror.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

The needs of the people have mostly been met through the years by an intelligent use of the country's own resources. Lack of intercourse with the neighbouring plains reduced trade to a minimum. There was little that the Lushai could manufacture, which could find any demand in the plains. Thus, it was for his own requirements that he chiefly applied his genius. This fact has had an important bearing on later Lushai for, with an increase in the range of imported goods, capable of easy acquisition, and the changes occasioned by the arrival of the Christian era in the ordinary lives of the people, demand for the products of indigenous genius has widely fallen off. With this fall in demand, such indigenous arts as weaving, basket making, pottery, metal working, lacquering, and smithying, are in real danger of disappearing.

We have seen that the Lushais were a migratory race. There has, therefore, never been any deep urge to accumulate household possessions on any extensive scale. In the face of such unpromising conditions it is all the more surprising that the quality of Lushai handwork attained its recognised excellence.

Domestic baskets are all made of plaited bamboo, usually by the menfolk, and these are reinforced by stout cane, which is very hard and durable. By smoking, the cane could be coloured a shiny mahogany to give some colour and pattern to the work. Many baskets are in use, baskets for storing valuables in the house, for carrying wood, rice, or articles for a short distance, as well as for far afield. The conical shape of some of the basket lids serves to render them almost waterproof.

The weaving is excellent, and is done on complicated indigenous hand looms, home-grown cotton being used. The whole process requires patience and time. The cotton is seeded by means of a small, locally made, ginning machine, crude wood moving parts operating reversely, which, with the help of pig's fat grease, slowly spit out the seeds. The cotton is then carded by means of a bow composed of a tight curved piece of cane connected at both ends by a

thin cane string. The fluffy cotton is then spun by hand, a feat which only becomes easy after considerable practice, the cotton finally being run into skeins.

Superficially, the Lushai loom appears easy to handle, but considerable practice is necessary to ensure equality in dimensions and regularity of design. The warp is bound over a fixed beam of wood or bamboo, and the other end is tautened by the weaver wearing, round the hollow of her back, a leather strap to which is attached the other end of the loom. The weaver sits between this leather and the loom, adjusting her position to suit the warp length. The woof is passed through by means of prepared spindles, and is battened firmly down by the use of a smooth, and comparatively weighty, blade of polished wood, usually of sago palm.

Designs are simple, but regular, varied and symbolic, denoting the walk of lovers along a village path; the cucumber seed, the tiger's tooth, a cluster of Mithan's eyes, or the notes of a musical xylophone. The designs in the South Lushai Hills, followed by the Pawi and Lakher women are more exquisite and more meticulously executed than in the North.

The green and red exhilaration of the women's cloths and the men's haversacks is derived from imported, rather than from the indigenous dyes, which, on the whole, have so far proved disappointing. Blue indigo, the *STROBILANTHES FLACCIDI FOLIA*, provides the dark blue, but the fact is the indigenous process does not as yet give satisfactory fastness. Degrees of fastness depend upon the number of immersions, and, as we observed in Chapter IV, it is not uncommon to find Lushai women with blue skeins never yet used, though originally coloured twenty or more years earlier, and dyed again and again at odd intervals.

Powder-horns, scabbards, wood combs, and other articles, were covered by lacquer, often very effectively. This art called for skill and care, and found expression in black and red. The Lushai *MEI THUI* tree, or *MELANORRHOEA*, provided the basis. Its bark was cut with a knife in several places, and the sap then appeared in a reddy-brown form.

When the tree was first tapped the sap seemed incapable of drying, and so a preliminary tapping was considered advisable. This sap can in some cases cause sores to the person handling it.

When the sap was ready for application, it could be blackened with soot and rubbed gently on to the article by the forefinger tip, when it had to be put in the shade and left to dry for a day or two before placing it finally in the sun. A further application could be made, care being taken that no wet lacquer was exposed directly to the sun, and no fresh application being made till the preceding coat had been finally dried out in the sun.

If it was desired to colour the article red, it was necessary to procure a red powder from the Burma side. This red could be mixed with the black to procure a desired or moderated shade. When the appropriate red shade was selected, the powder was touched with the forefinger, already wet from the sap, and the mixture applied to the object once only. But after this process the article could be put out in the sun without delay.

Unhappily, due to the fact that the objects which formerly used to be so coloured, themselves falling into ever-decreasing demand, this art of lacquering is fast dying out in Lushai, and the modern Lushai lacquering has little to no similarity to that found on the relics of olden days.

Brass and copper moulding called for considerable skill, especially as these metals had to be imported. The process is rather complicated. A model is made in clay, covered with bees-wax, and then carefully designed by direct application, after which the whole is again covered by cotton wool and soft clay, a tube channel being left, through which the molten brass will eventually be poured. At this stage the contraption is dried in the sun, care being taken to ensure that no crack will take place in the clay. The next stage is to heat it in a fire, so that the bees-wax will melt, leaving receptacles for the acceptance of the molten metal. The cast, still hot, is held by tongs and the metal, now molten, is poured in evenly, so that it settles coolly in the desired shape. After some time the clay cast is broken away, leaving the metal creation, it is hoped,

accurately fashioned. It was in this way that the more well-to-do fashioned their broomstick handles, sword handles, pipes for their women, or the syphon fittings necessary for starting the suction process from beer pots to the beer mugs.

The hill-man is not unlike others, in that if there is no need for things, he will not waste time and effort on making them. The trouble is that there is no section of the community which as yet possesses a natural liking or pride sufficient to support retention of these arts for the sake of the art itself. Lushai is at the beginning of the transition stage, and it can only be hoped that indigenous arts can be preserved until Lushai throws up a national spirit of her own, led by men of vision, culture, and courage, who will then themselves actively set out to resuscitate the genius of their forbears. Missions are often unfairly blamed, on the ground that the abandonment of indigenous forms of national expression is due to their repression of them on religious grounds. In the case of Lushai, the people themselves have, for the moment, lost their zest for anything which has no immediate utility. Christianity has provided an easy, perhaps frugal, method of obtaining spirit satisfaction, with the result that the sacrifices of old, and their old associations, now have no place in the everyday. Added to this trend is the fact that exotic, and often trashy, substitutes from foreign sources more easily meet an impressionable public's desires. No effort on the mission's part could frustrate this landslide at this stage of Lushai development.

FOOD AND COOKING

Lushai tastes and culinary arts could hardly be more simple. The only form of cooking widely used is boiling, ingredients of a meal rarely being cooked in separate pots. Three meals are taken, one shortly after sunrise, one at midday, and one at dusk, none varying very much from rice cooked with mustard, jungle vegetables, or roots. Variety in taste and the mineral needs are secured chiefly by the addition of salt, chillies, occasionally ginger, and turmeric, and green vegetable and egg yolk. It is the

exception for fats or oils to be used in cooking though, by the introduction of what is called SAUM, some fat and tastiness are provided. SAUM is a queer sort of palate titillation. When pig, or perhaps another animal, is killed, fatty portions of the animal are slowly boiled towards liquidity, and this is then placed into an earthen pot and hung up near the hearth for use during the ensuing months. Twice a week or so a portion of this spicy contribution will be added to the ordinary meals to give them an additional kick. Ash water drained through wood ash is a regular ingredient in most meals.

Meat never played a large part in the Lushai diet. Domestic animals were not kept for the table, but as currency and wealth, kills only being made on special high days and feast days. Meat so eaten was all considered as extra, was eaten in lumps, and formed no part of the routine meals. Game provided a welcome change and everything from field rats to elephants are ever in demand, caught by trap or shot by guns, in the case of those lucky enough to possess these treasures, the envy of all good hill-men. The women have always been fastidious over eating meals and turn away from bear, the domestic dog, on account of its unpleasant proclivities, deer usually, and certainly tiger meat, which is only eaten by young bucks of the ZAWLBUKS or bachelors' barracks.

The cat has escaped all envy, for none would eat this animal, whose origin in Lushai none can trace. If ownership of a cat is ever changed it is always arranged without price !

Pumpkins, cabbage, onions, brinjal, yams, cucumbers, creeper beans, ginger, arum, bamboo shoots, and many jungle herbs and leaves, provide the main aids to a staple diet of rice or maize, none of which is ever taken in the ground form. Fruits appeal more to the young than to the adult. The chief fruits include banana, papaya, guava, mango, and the various wild plums, mulberries, figs, and the nutty fruits of the jungles.

Insects were often eaten by the men or the boys with relish. These included crickets, hornets, winged ants, beetles, bulb and bamboo maggots, bats, spiders, and

tadpoles. Honey is a luxury, and the Chief of the land is, by custom, entitled to ownership. Hornbill is a great favourite on account of its great fat and oil content.

Frogs, tortoise, porcupine, squirrel, and rats, are great delicacies. Women prefer prawn or land-crab, which can cause immense excitement. On one occasion, not long ago, a crab in some peculiar way got caught between a door and its hinges. A Lushai woman spotting this gave tongue with fervid frenzy to call her menfolk nearby to see her good fortune. Great talk ensued around this crab, and plans were woven for the manner of its consumption.

In the case of the hard livers, Zu, Lushai beer, made from fermented rice, was a frequent part of the day's diet, and as this Zu was strong in vitamin B its abandonment, in the later development of Lushai, may call for some counter-measure. But Zu was never a daily item of diet for the ordinary home, it having been rather the mark of some real festa. The Chiefs and more well-to-do people would drink it daily, usually to excess, but amid a very natural conviviality.

The method of taking meals in an ordinary house is simple. The food is put on to a large dish of wood placed on the floor of the house, and all will sit around and help themselves with their hands, the men taking unchallenged precedence over children and the women. Decor demands that visitors should not intrude at this time, as the eaters will be embarrassed, for the very good reason that, in the Lushai way of expression, "their faces would be dirty".

Modern more well-to-do Lushais are rapidly improving their diets with obvious result. Oils specially, also spices, and much more meat are all being taken in increasing quantities.

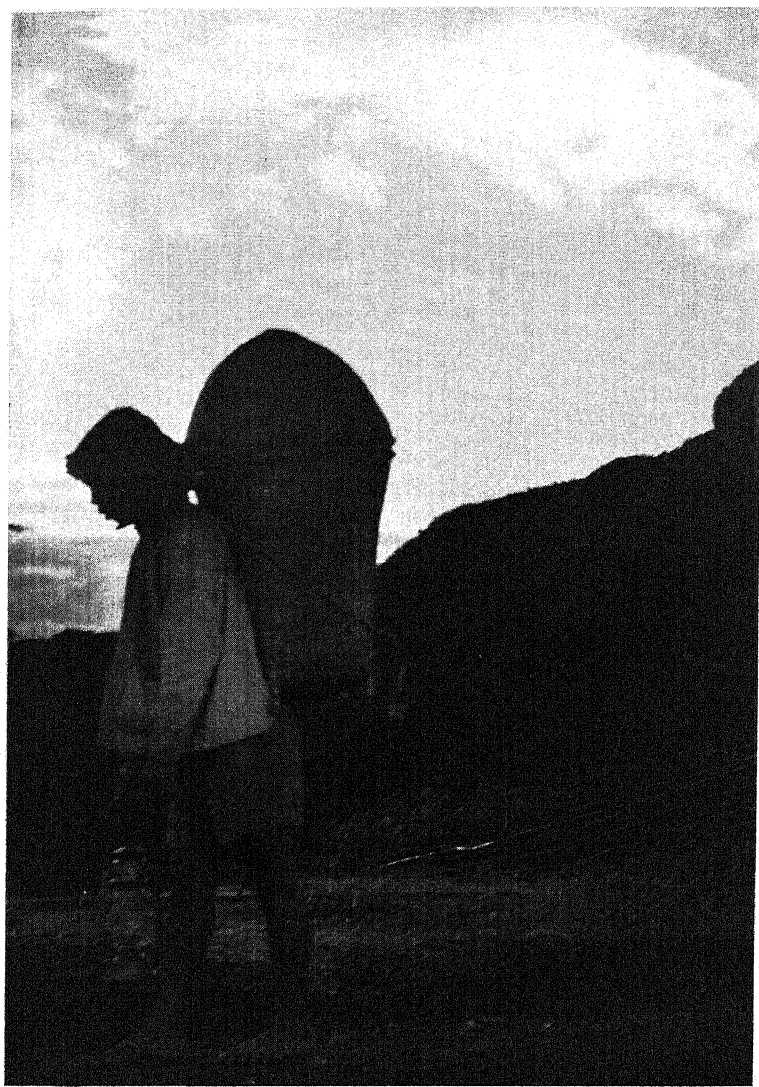
All these various items are collectively available, but, individually, they are by no means always at hand. Energy-giving foods are generally amply available, but protective foods are not sufficiently sought. In the latter category greater efforts are needed in broadening the availability of milk, green vegetables and eggs, cheese, meal, spinach, millet, and maize, for its iron, and small fish and bones with onions for the iodine content against the goitre scourge.

Vitamin A is generally available through root vegetables, with vitamin B in green-leaf vegetables and eggs, with Zu also when taken. Vitamin C can be available from bamboo shoots, oranges, and English importations, like tomatoes, lemons, and green vegetables. Vitamin D is generally available through sweet potatoes, eggs, and, very occasionally, fish, while in the early stages of childhood, through the sun. Unfortunately, an uninformed and superficial manifestation of 'advance' in the shape of European covering for adults, is depriving the nation of one of the most natural and cheapest sources of this vitamin through the sun's rays. Vitamin E is widely available through rice and green leaves.

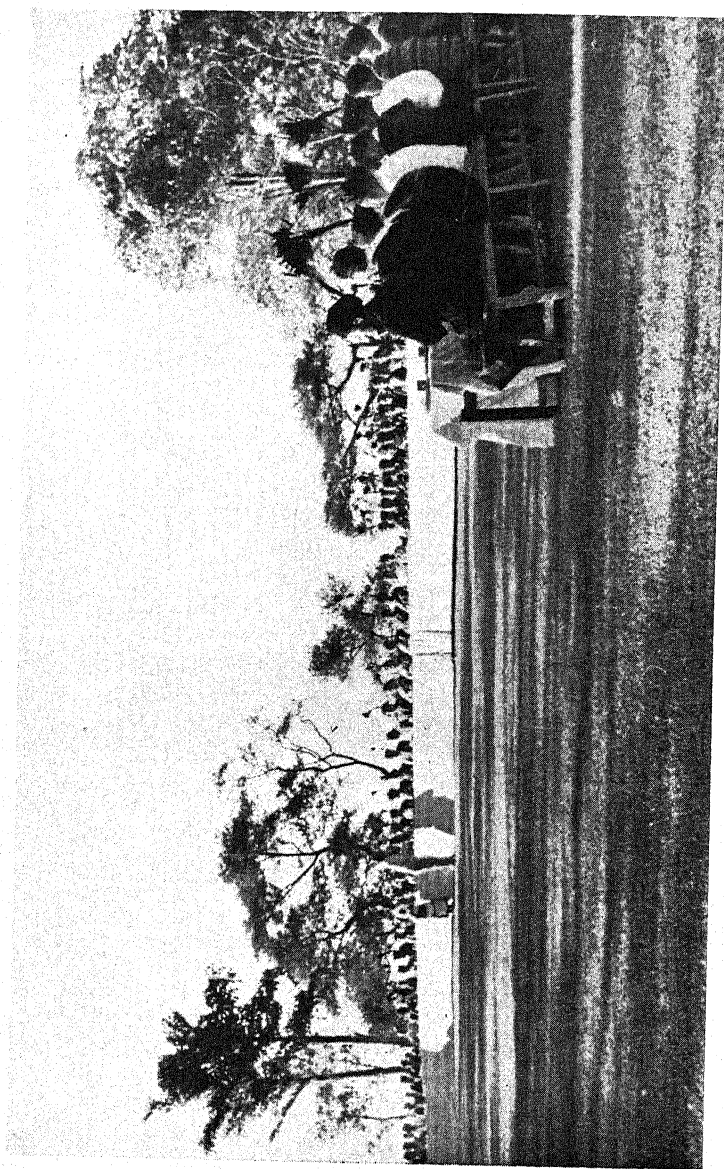
The greatest needs for the improvement of diets for preventive purposes include meats, milk, fats and oils, meal and cheeses, liver, millet, maize and fish, fish-bones, and onions. All these are comparatively scarce in the hills. Their encouragement is essential, as well as an ever broadening basis of fruit consumption. Until this can be obtained the Lushai will continue to bow the knee to debility and wasting diseases unnecessarily. It is all a matter of education. With the possible, but by no means inevitable, exception of oils, these dietetic deficiencies could be easily remedied. If 'education' was more comprehensive, greater strides would soon be made. In the rectification of these dietetic deficiencies lies one of Lushai's greatest sources of wealth.

DANCING

Lushai dancing was always limited in its development. What made the dances, usually, were the repartees and lewd jokes at the beer-drinking parties. Movements were jerky and encouraged by ejaculation of high-pitched cat-calls. The postures were often difficult—knees bent, one leg kicked straight out in front, while the body was supported on the other bended knee. While the dance lasts it is attractive, and has a tempo which is in itself very pleasant, with a hint of syncopation. There were also other dances, of more open and less confined movements. One was the KHUL-LAM.



EARLY MORNING START



Tea to the Chiefs of Lushai on the circular lawn of the residence of the Superintendent Lushai Hills. This lawn was made by filling up a huge excavation intended to retain rain water for drinking purposes. But percolation proved insuperable.

This dance was performed on the occasion of the very important KHUANGCHAWI ceremony performed with the hope that the performer would be assured of paradise. The various phases of the ceremony might take many years to complete. When a man was going to perform the Khuang-chawi ceremony he would send a special messenger to his father-in-law, if the father-in-law happened to live in another village. The messenger would prepare a forked piece of bamboo to which white cock's feathers and pieces of ginger were attached. This bamboo he would then fix in his hair, and on arrival he would place it in the wall of the house, which divided the inner house from the back veranda. The messenger had to preserve strict silence while on this mission, but when the bamboo had been placed in the wall and the father-in-law had killed a pig, this part of the ceremony was complete.

It was then usual for the father-in-law to arrange a dancing party of young men, who would start out for the village of the sacrificer. On the day when the sacrifice commenced the party would dance in the village street, and many would welcome and applaud. This dance was really the dance of the strangers, and when it is done under modern conditions, to portray an entry to a village, it is quite effective, gongs beating a regular rhythm as the dancers sway from side to side in ordered step, swishing open their coloured cloths from time to time.

GENERAL

The Lushais are great smokers, women as well as men, if not children, and they use home-grown tobacco, which has an aroma many Europeans dislike intensely, yet this aroma provides a soft, if somewhat pungent, smoke. The pipes of the men and the women differ. The men use a bowl made from a special bamboo connected with a stem, while the women's pipes are more complicated and fanciful. Their pipe has a metal container, in which the nicotine water is collected and given to the smokers' special braves in the belief that this water will encourage them to ever greater heights of fame. The metal stem is neatly engraved by means of the local method of metal work designed

through heated wax. Guests to the house were also honoured by being given a mouthful of this nicotine water from the family store, kept in a gourd, and after washing it round the mouth for a minute or two, it would be ejected none being swallowed. Only the people in the interior still follow this custom, the intelligentsia and more sophisticated members of society making no concealment of their dislike of the whole proceeding. The men's pipes are of more importance than they look. The bowl is made of a special bamboo, which does not ordinarily grow in Lushai. Men from the Chin Hills come over with these bowls to sell to Lushais at about threepence each. The merit of this bowl is that it is broader at the base than at the top. This may help to make it steadier, as well as to contain the tobacco better. One bamboo will give ten to twelve such bowls. One or two Lushais have started to grow some of these bamboos, aiming at securing a steady market for their sale.

No restriction is placed on children smoking. This may sound very wicked, but well-wishers of Lushai may be advised to leave well alone, in view of the fact that Lushais have managed to keep entirely clear of ganja, the *CANNABIS INDICA*, as well as the injurious and disastrous habit of taking opium, which has caused such distress among many of Lushai land's neighbours. One new habit is already beginning to creep in, as a result of contact with the Plains of India, and this is the chewing of the Betel nut from the Areca Catechu palm.

Ornaments have always been popular, and take the form of ivory ear-rings, now, however, falling into disuse, brass or other hairpins, amber and cornelian necklaces and combs, latterly necklaces of strung coin also being in fair demand. Ivory ear-rings used to take the form of smooth ivory discs about one-and-a-half inches in diameter, which were worn in the ear lobes, which had to be pierced specially and continually stretched from early childhood days. Great sentimental value has always been attached to such property, handed down from generation to generation, with the result that intrinsic values have often been greatly inflated. There are houses in the interior, with corrugated iron roofs, which pay tribute to the success of traders in amber beads and necklaces.

Although the idea of caste, on any analogy to the Hindu system in India, is repugnant to the Lushai, there has always been a certain sense of rivalry between clans. This sometimes militated against any free interchange of personal items, such as ear-rings or combs, which no one believing himself to be higher in status would accept from another. There was mingled with this attitude a measure of spirit complex in that it was commonly believed that if a person happened to be endowed with the spirit of a wizard or a witch the calamity could be conveyed through the medium of a comb or ornament.

There have never been any indigenous round games for adults, as we know them, though there are Lushai games in which prowess, generally speaking, is of individual importance.

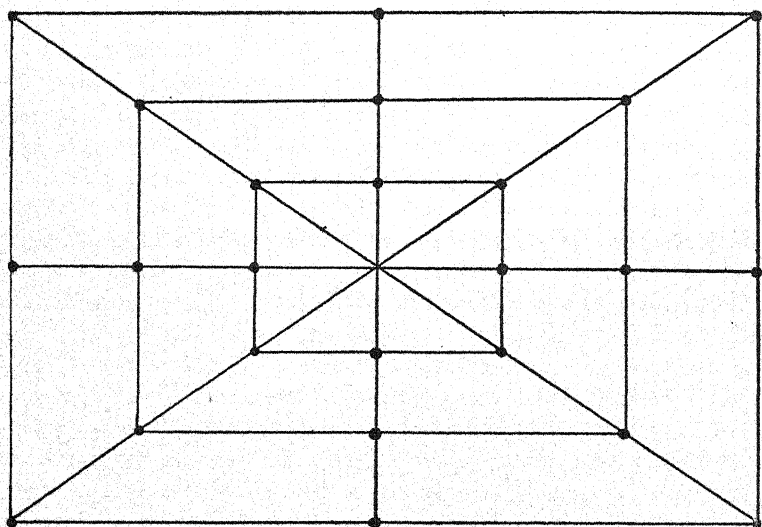
Wrestling is still common, but the object does not lie in pressing your opponent on his back on the ground, but in closing with him and manœuvring to lift him off his legs. It is a foul to place the leg in such a way as to cause an opponent to fall. It is unsporting to use weight by dragging down an opponent from almost a sitting posture. Within these restrictions the contest can be hard and long, each seeking his chance to apply a heavy attack to lift the other off his feet. Successful wrestlers challenge up the line till they have established a claim to challenge the local champion. Visitors to a village are often challenged, but they are never compelled to accept. If they refuse, however, they are soon placed in their proper social perspective.

Games played with beans are common among girls as well as boys, the former holding the bean in two hands, the latter in one. The object of the game is to hurl beans at stationary ones on the ground in such a way that any hits are moved at least one foot away. There are various stages in a complete round, and the party who knocks away the other's beans most successfully wins a round. The game continues, and is counted in rounds, which have been won till the time comes when play just has to stop. The aiming has to be very skilful, and many of the young people become real experts in crashing on to the beans on the ground from quite distant shies.

Tops produce a competitive game. These are very cleverly and patiently made out of hardwood trees by hand, success lying with the owner who can keep his top spinning for the longest time.

Hide-and-seek is played in the houses, the children hiding anywhere. When all have been found out the one first caught becomes the 'He'. A touch-last game is good fun. This is played in the open streets, the houses acting as places of refuge. Once on a house-step the player is safe, but if he stays too long he would be disqualified, the game being to cover as much ground as possible between refuges without being caught by the 'He'.

There is one clever game of skill played on a design.



Each player has ten men, and play is by turn. The object is to get three men in a complete line vertically or horizontally. When this occurs, the successful player can seize any one of his opponent's men. The one who captures all the opponent's men wins. Moves may only be made to or from adjacent marks,

The range of musical instruments was limited by indigenous resources, which, however, were ingeniously applied. There was the ever popular Lushai drum, even now in constant use, made of wood hollowed out with animal skin stretched tight across the frame, and held firmly by cane twists. Leaves and rice-shoots were used to set up shrill notes. Flutes and whistles were made from bamboo. Gongs were usually imported from Burma, and were often made up into sets of three, on which varying cadences registered the tempo of emotion. There was a kind of xylophone, composed of five pieces of wood about two foot long, which produced variations with the help of two wooden strikers. The Lushai bagpipe was most ingenious, being made up from eight bamboos about two feet long and as thick as one's thumb, all being fixed into a dried gourd, the wind being provided by a single bamboo also let into the gourd. The gourd also figured in a kind of violin played with one string stretched over some intestinal skin from a Mithan or a goat. Many of these devices are still in common use.

Many of these instruments were played only by the prophets of old, the soothsayers, and because these have lost all honour they ever had, it is rare now to see such instruments, let alone hear them. Attempts have been made by sharp-witted folk to trade on their less sophisticated and more credulous countrymen through the medium of palmistry. But this has not met with any great success, as in the case of one man who, with deliberation and a great show of wisdom, foretold that his client would have a "bright future". The prophecy became only too true when within seven days the client was struck down by lightning, and was extremely lucky to have escaped death at the hands of this brightness! The irate victim with the bright future sued the palmist for witchery, with the result that the palmist had to quit business. In the "good old days" he would most certainly have been a dead man—with the approbation of the whole community.

A baffling factor in Lushai life has been the amount of insanity among the people. The incidence is five per cent higher among women than among men in a population

which discloses the highest lunacy incidence of any district in the Province of Assam—350 per each hundred thousand. Where lies the cause? The answer to this question is as yet unknown.

Venereal disease can practically be ruled out as the cause, as its incidence is extremely small. The presence of yaws is also an indication of the comparative absence of its more terrifying prototype. Zu might have been suspected of affecting pregnant mothers through their own over-indulgence or through rough manhandling by drunken husbands, but since Zu drinking has diminished so much under the influence of mission teaching, without any appreciable diminution in the insanity incidence, this can probably be ruled out. There remains nutrition. Indigenous Lushai diet lacks certain vital constituents, if the high level of debility diseases, such as hookworm, malaria, and pyorrhoea is any guide. The obvious absence of any sense of contraceptive practices at the present stage of development results in ever larger surviving families, with the inevitable strain on Lushai mothers. It may be possible, after careful examination, to connect the incidence of insanity with the later progeny of wearied mothers, a line put forward as a strong possibility by Captain J. Caverhill, of the Indian Medical Service, when he was Civil Surgeon of the District. An apparently facetious, but naively intriguing, idea once offered from a responsible quarter was that this insanity was the inevitable outcome of a highly emotional people surrendering without restraint to the alluring exhibitionism of revivalist excesses. That such abandon has resulted in the total moral collapse of societies, murderous assaults without any normal motive of any kind, and many individuals losing their minds, leads to the possibility that there may be more in this latter theory than parties interested in this movement might wish to admit. Due to the absence, however, of any information relating to Lushai before the British occupation, the diagnosis of the cause of this unhappy scourge must be left to those capable of its achievement. That this is one of the major needs of Lushai may be gauged from the following extract from the Police Report for 1939, which reads as follows :—

"A Lushai killed his mother, sister, minor son and neighbour and wounded two other persons and subsequently committed suicide."

Sexual intercourse usually takes place nowadays at night in the houses, and in spite of the higgledy-piggledy way in which children of varying ages sleep near and around the parents' bed, great care is taken to preserve secrecy, usually with success. We must remember that Lushai houses are dark and without any light, other than, perhaps, the glow from ebbing cinders in the hearth. In spite of the risks of being caught, this act not infrequently takes place on the way to or from the cultivation or in the tiny houses, which are built amid the hill cultivation far from the village home. Contact with civilisation does not seem to have introduced any exotic developments. But in the old days the young bridegroom was unlikely to sleep with his wife in his own house until there were children. He would rather seek out his wife by dead of night and return stealthily before the early morning to the Zawlbuk or the Bachelors' Barrack. Nowadays, like Mr. Jorrocks, "where he dines, there he sleeps". The woman's position in these matters is that rather of the chattel submitting to her husband's wishes, and she is in no position to assert her convenience.

By now we have a fairly good idea of most aspects of Lushai, and with this understanding we may find it more easy to follow the vicissitudes of Lushai since the district was amalgamated and placed under a Superintendent on April the First, 1898.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST FORTY YEARS OF CONTACTS

1898-1938

FREYA STARK : " It is distance and absence that allows foreign weeds

to grow. They are reasonable people till an idea lodges in their heads, when, like most of us they have no room for any others, so it is vital to see that the suitable idea get in first. I take it that this is the Art of Government."

Winter in Arabia.

MAIN CONTACTS, GOVERNMENT AND THE MISSIONS

In the preceding chapters an attempt has been made to afford some insight into the land and the people of Lushai. We have met the people on our arrival into their land. We have glimpsed into the past by a glance at known history, sought out some of the inner workings of the mind, formed some idea of their customs, had an introduction to the implications of well-meaning, but inappropriate, zeal for reform, and perused some accounts of litigation. The general picture gives us some idea at least of the people and their inner feelings—the body politic upon which fell at once the majesty, as well as the weight, of an unsolicited British connection. Before we can prescribe for the future we must take count of the present, a present which has been created out of the adjustments in the lives and hearts of the people, consequent upon the influence to which, rightly or wrongly, they have been exposed.

The advent of the British form of government and control for a time certainly paralysed the people. This was inevitable. Raiding excursions by Lushai had been countered abruptly by the permanent incursion of a power and a might far beyond the full comprehension of innate Lushai. All through the history of Lushai relations runs strong evidence of the respect and desire felt by the people for power. The British occupation of Lushai marked the presence of a power, hitherto unforeseen and unimagined. The world of Lushai was staggered, bewildered.

Within their lands, the Lushai people soon found two powerful contacts were at work. One was the Government, in the personality of the Political Officer, later the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, and the other was the missionaries, who had come into Lushai on the heels of the British conquest. The former aimed at securing peace, law, and order, while the latter aimed at converting the Lushais from their animist beliefs to those of the Christian religion, as interpreted from their standpoint. The missions shared much in common among themselves, differing only in the particular. All sincerely applied themselves to contribute to the pacification of the people. The mission in the north is the Welsh Presbyterian, and that in the south the London Baptist Missionary Society. Against these varying contacts the Lushais had no equipment on which to fall back for strength, except the traditions and the stories of their grandfathers. But the pillars of their strength had tumbled down with shame and humiliation before these new and irresistible British invaders.

PART MISSIONS CAN PLAY

It was Sir Hector Duff who, after a great many years of administration in Africa, gave it as his experience that, even at the end of his career, he found it impossible to condemn missionary enterprise, in spite of much harm that it caused, because it induced so much that was clearly for the good of a people. When anthropologists too vociferously condemn missions on principle, they place themselves on a par with the over-anxious mother who dreams of every means by which her bairns may grow up, protected and free from the contamination of other little children and, later, from the dangers of adolescence, and, even later, from the inevitable wiles of women and the vagaries of the big wide world. Missions are, after all, only one form of contact. Like other forms of contacts, they should be led and guided, not ignored or persecuted. They will usually respond quickly enough to sincere invitation aimed at bettering the condition of the people. If they do not, they should be shown up to the comity of

missions. Missions are not competent to direct administration. In a consultative capacity they can be invaluable. In strong-headed, emotional, stands against an administration working among a backward people, they can constitute a public menace.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE BRITISH OCCUPATION

Backward peoples are so-called because they have escaped or resisted stronger culture contacts. Yet, let some Girl Guides from the Midlands of England try to teach their Lushai friends a thing or two about observation, use of jungle resources, or camping, and see where they land!! But, as the development of the world's resources continues apace and distances continue to diminish, backward peoples can only avoid ever-widening contacts by some form of artificial demarcation and control. Even if stronger influences favoured such ideas, it is unlikely that the backward peoples themselves would take so happily to this ordered isolation. The British Government, however, by force of circumstances was compelled, against their will, to occupy Lushai land, and the impact locally has been decisive and tremendous. Perhaps, it may be that we failed to comprehend the serious responsibility for humanity, Lushai in particular, which we thereby undertook. Perhaps we considered our responsibility could be discharged by affording the missionaries *carie blanche* to work among the Lushai peoples. Whatever the considerations may, or may not, have been, the history of the first forty years of contacts has been overshadowed by a full-scale assault upon the people by the missions, and a watching brief by Government, operating chiefly without much positive policy, relying, rather, for its contribution on the efficacy of a static preservation of the customs of the people. If there are faults, Government, as well as the Missions, is fully contributory.

It has been happy for Lushai that she has been spared the regrettable associations attributed to some mission enterprises in the Southern Pacific and elsewhere, where the Word of the Lord and handsome material prizes went enthusiastically hand in hand, and where races, worn by

frenzy and hysteria, were nearly exterminated by diseases and emasculation. If there has been materialism, it has been certainly no different from that of many religious organisations, the materialism promoted by an unconscious lapse into the worship of the Institution rather than that for which the Institution stands, or the materialism derived from service to an ego, rather than to the people, who stand in need. Incidentally, in such a possibility does there not lie, perhaps, a hint of why many of those engaged in the service of institutionalised religion have failed to keep up with the great spiritual cleansing and resuscitation, originating among those engaged in the Great War of 1914-18, and which we are witnessing increasingly to-day in the example shown by the ordinary peoples of our Nation, in all walks of life, in their constant peril, calamity, and deprivation?

While Government's contribution to changing Lushai has been quite properly the provision of law, order, and a modicum of utility services, all backed by a policy of upholding the social customs of the people, the impact of the missions, backed by as many as twenty Europeans, has been dynamic and sustained. Government personnel changes constantly, while missionaries, often actuated by religious fervour, remain years on end at their posts. The changes they have wrought have been often spectacular, necessarily involving attack after attack on tradition. It is, however, one thing to eradicate and another to build up securely. Herein lies the whole secret of the modern problem of Lushai in her chrysalis stage.

IMPORTANCE OF THE COMBINATION OF OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED TO MISSIONS THROUGH HANDLING OF SPIRITUAL AND EDUCATIONAL INSTRUCTION

The Government position has been further compromised by the early delegation of all education to the missions. Thus, the missions have been placed, even before 1900, in the almost exceptional position of being the official educationists, while, in fact, still being inevitably wedded to their call of spreading the Holy Gospel. This combination of opportunities has resulted in their becoming most

important employers, and education, itself the passport to material distinction, early became very nearly synonymous with the need for Christianity, if not with Christianity itself. It is essential to grasp at the outset the tremendous importance this combination of circumstances has been to the administration and the people all through the years. The weight of this combination has thrown upon the administration a peculiar need for special and appropriate measures. When such a non-official body is entrusted by Government with the spiritual, as well as the educational, teaching of a people it is quite idle to deny that the most effective daily influence on all the people of the hills must be that exercised by the employees of the Mission Educational and Church departments. In such circumstances, the only hope for any administration towards exercising some influence to ensure that "the suitable idea gets in first" lies in its ability to secure the co-operation of the missions in applying any influence the administration would wish to apply. Lushai has probably been more fortunate than many other districts under British rule, to which the foregoing remarks could equally apply. As we shall see later, one problem at this chrysalis stage in Lushai has been created by the unfortunate absence of sufficient positive influence on the day to day political and economic development of the people. This negative approach can be associated partly with the failure of the British peoples to declare in any legislative form some machinery to ensure that by positive means the "suitable idea" will permeate the minds of the people, not only in Lushai, but in kindred lands. Without such legislative determination, any chance of the development of suitable ideas must remain problematical and unlikely. There is a half-way between an attitude of crude regimentation and that of a mere watcher's brief. It is the half-way which should be the aim. If an offer is made, but rejected, responsibility must fall on those who turn from sound offers.

PARTICULARS OF THE MISSIONS AT WORK

Thus, from 1898, the influence of the missions spread rapidly through the Hills, more slowly at first, in the face of some prejudice and natural conservatism, but, from just

before the Great War and after, in ever-increasing tempo. In the North, where the people are more homogeneous than in the South, over three-quarters of the people profess membership of the Lushai Church, as sponsored by the Welsh Mission. The Salvation Army also has a following. In the South very few of the people can be said to be immune to mission influence. In the very extreme South of the District in the territory known as Lakherland, which borders on the Burma Districts of Aracan and the Chin Hills, the Lakher Pioneer Mission is at work. This is sustained by the Reverend and Mrs. Reginald Lorrain, and latterly they have been assisted by Mr. Lorrain Foxall and Mrs. Lorrain-Foxall, known among her friends as TLONGSAI, TLONGSAI with the eyes of exquisite serenity and repose. The name TLONGSAI is that of the principal clan among the Lakhers, and Mrs. Lorrain-Foxall was so christened by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lorrain, in whose house she was born at Sherkhor, in the very heart of Lakherland, nearly seventy miles from the nearest post office at Lungleh. The latest arrival at Sherkhor is Miss Violet Lorrain-Foxall, who, like her mother, TLONGSAI, was also born in Sherkhor, in 1938.

DRASTIC CHANGES IN THE LIBERTIES OF CHIEFS BROUGHT ABOUT BY GOVERNMENT ACTION

The opportunities thus offered to the missionaries were certainly not curtailed by the crushing changes that the Government found itself unavoidably compelled to force upon the traditional chiefs, after they had been subdued by weight of arms. Some of the ways in which the status of the ruling Chiefs had to be adversely affected by the Government in this way may be summarised below :—

1. The lands in occupation of the Chiefs at the time of the British occupation were reverted to vest in the Government, who then apportioned out the land to Chiefs, as circumstances suited, but guided generally by existing possession.

It would have been difficult to have acted otherwise, as it would have meant an unsatisfactory settlement

on a treaty basis with as many as possibly sixty to one hundred families within an area of 8,000 square miles.

The effect, however, was that the Chiefs stood vanquished and bereft of their erstwhile freedom of action.

Moreover in, some cases, lands were made over to persons who had no pretence to Chieftainship under indigenous conditions. This, in itself, helped to lower the whole status of the traditional Chiefs.

2. The following traditional rights of Chiefs were also arbitrarily extinguished to meet the exigencies of the situation :—

- (a) Right to order capital punishment.
- (b) Right to seize food stores and property of villagers, who wished to transfer their allegiance.
- (c) Proprietary rights over lands, now arbitrarily reserved by Government, in the interests of the public living in neighbouring areas in British India.
- (d) Right to tax traders doing business within the Chiefs' jurisdiction.
- (e) Right to freedom of action in relation to making their sons Chiefs under their own jurisdiction.
- (f) Right to help those Bawis¹ who were, by custom, not open to redemption.
- (g) Right of freedom of action in relation to other kinds of Bawis, who used to constitute the means whereby the Chiefs could cultivate and acquire the ability to sustain their villages in peace and in war.
- (h) Right to attach the property of their villagers when they wished or deemed fit, with or without fault on the part of the villagers.

It cannot possibly be claimed that these former rights had much, if any, justification, judged by British standards of administration. But their early and precipitate extinction pulverised the Chiefs before all their people. Yet it was, and still is, through these very Chiefs and their descendants that the people have to be governed.

¹ BAWIS—paupers, dependants, see *Chapter V* for controversy.

These facts are not recorded in a spirit of considered condemnation of Government's unavoidable action, but rather to emphasize that when Government itself has to be prepared to sweep aside privileges by the stroke of a pen, regardless of the gaps so caused, some moderation is befitting before condemning the inevitable results of European missionary influence. There is no room, whatever, for any sense of perfection in Government's own approach to a problem, which was, is, and will be, difficult, and which demands far greater care than is generally realised, judging from much which has been written on this interesting and vital problem of the administration of backward peoples.

COSTS INCURRED BY GOVERNMENT ON EDUCATION AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

The cost incurred by the Government on the education of the Lushais has never exceeded three halfpence per head of population per year, within the first forty years of British Administration. In the latter part of this period seven hundred pounds sterling has been spent yearly on 150,000 people. The progress made has been due chiefly to the missions and their own funds, a progress which has placed Lushai very high up in the standards of literacy, as gauged from the *All India Census Report* for 1931, which discloses the percentage of literacy as being as high as 12.9 per hundred, an incidence further increased to 19.3 in the 1941 census. This incidence is remarkable, compared to the 2.2 figure of the Naga Hills Census of 1931. This incidence covers those who can both read and write.

But European missionaries have been wedded to the call of spreading the Gospel, and have been subject to the wishes of home directorates, with the result that technical considerations have not always prevailed, while, sometimes, differences of opinions among the missionaries also became inevitable. To add to their difficulties the missionaries have always been faced with the truism that their success depended greatly upon their popularity with the people. It was to such a machinery that Government originally entrusted the educational needs of the Lushai people,

assisting, chiefly, by making grants in aid of rather small dimensions.

The situation has been rendered more difficult by the fact that the making of personal contacts within the Hills has always been a formidable obstacle. The District is unserved by any communications which permit of travel faster than the human can walk. All the contact in fact, which is possible normally to-day, is that of the hiker at large in Wales, who has constant responsibilities at his headquarters. Missionaries have thus been compelled to tackle their approach through Lushai employees at work out in the District, often out of sight or contact for months on end. Those Lushais at the headquarters stations of Aijal and Lungleh have naturally had the greater share of personal contacts with the local directorates. The Welsh Mission has employed about eight or nine missionaries, including two hospital sisters, to cover two-thirds of this large land, while the London Baptist Mission in the South has employed about eight missionaries, including two hospital sisters, to cover less than one-third of the District. It follows that the personal contacts have had better chances of success in the South than in the North, where much more has had to be left to the Lushai employees. Missions everywhere would do well to accept the inescapable fact that it is more sincere, if less exhilarating, to confine their influence to the ground they can personally cover than to attempt undertakings which it is beyond the capacity of their staff to fulfil. The people among whom Christ and his Apostles spread the Gospel were not entirely primitive or backward people. If some criticisms of the missions appear severe their cause probably lies more in the actions of their Lushai employees than in those of the missionaries themselves.

As the bulk of funds for the education of the Lushai people has been found by the missions, it is only natural that the school teachers have been selected with due regard to their standing with the Lushai Church. This has tended towards teachers seeking theological, rather than educational, technique. Lushais have remained educationally in the hands of this system up to the close of the middle standards.

After the middle standards, a certain number of Lushai students have been able to take the matriculation course at a high school outside their own territory. The Lushais have thus been in the habit of taking the ordinary general courses laid down by the supreme educational authority concerned, which is the Calcutta University of the neighbouring province of Bengal. No curriculum has ever been devised specially to suit the peculiar needs of the Lushai or similar people, agricultural people living in an agricultural land, economically poor, geographically remote. The curriculum up to the middle standard has perforce been subject to the influence of Calcutta University's conception of what a matriculation course should be to solve the intricate problem of the educational fashioning of young Bengal. Such a curriculum cannot fully meet the needs of a backward people, destined to live out their lives in a hard land amid an agricultural setting.

Local educational practice soon gave rise to the belief that education and Christianity were the passport to "salaried jobs", relief from the wearisome toil of cultivating a hard land. Education has constituted a means to a dead end, the salaried post. It has beckoned young Lushai towards distant lands and ideas, rather than towards the land of their birth, the land of their future. The salaried post has been termed a dead end, because it has so often marked the cessation of all further real effort.

CREATION OF A PRIVILEGED CLASS

These conditions have combined to precipitate a kind of vicious circle. Black-coated occupations became synonymous with progress. Christianity led towards blackcoatism. Blackcoatism involved monthly salaries which secured the beneficiary from subjection to the inevitability of traditional village life. Monthly salaries gave the beneficiary a special, in fact, quite a new material power, while Christianity provoked a challenge to spiritual forces among the people. Christianity and material independence from the soil were clearly two main characteristics of the new "white Chiefs", and their assimilation would eliminate the difference between the primitive and the all-powerful.

This blackcoatism is a phenomenon noticeable also in New Guinea and such territories.

From the start it was the children and relations of the new rich for whom the new and novel experience of middle and higher education became possible. Among the new rich, in addition to the mission workers, can be included the salaried employees of Government. In this way all through the years the salaried classes have retained their initial advantage, and it is their sons, daughters, and relatives, who have all along enjoyed advantages, not easily open to the ordinary and typical Lushai villager, whose resources for education, after the free primary course, could only be derived from the toilsome labour of producing surplus crops, and from the still more difficult task of converting this surplus into cash, within an economy that contained no provision for exports or adequate marketing. It is in this way that a kind of oligarchy or intelligentsia has sprung up, which has no place in the indigenous society of Lushai. It is from this class that doctors are produced to serve communities, which are often too ignorant to be capable of accepting their service. This class also gives agricultural experts, whose advice so often falls on ears too deaf to hear or minds too entrenched to believe, also nurses, whose hygienic methods court hostility from the Lushai village public, traders, whose words have found no trust, and many others absorbed in their ego, rather than fired with any vision of a Lushai nation, strong and united, or looking to Lushai for greatness and prosperity. The lesson, for any who wish to learn, is that it is no use squandering resources to create a large number of experts, or an intelligentsia, to serve a community too backward and remote to be receptive of their service.

This oligarchy, or privileged class, has sprung up as a product of a system of education conceived to accommodate the children of Indian culture with a pattern moulded by the toil and tribulation of thousands of years of human endeavour, trial and error, in circumstances in which the Lushai background has little, if anything at all, in common. Lushai instinct is steeped in the attributes, as well as the defects, of the nomad, the fatalism, and yet colour, of

animism, the subjection of the individual to the major needs of communal security, the whole pervaded by the ever-present need for propitiating the countless spirits, which have dominated life all through the years. Such a background has not been productive of leadership, independence of thought, conservation of property, thought for the morrow, precision of application and inspiration, and all those qualities without which academic achievement must remain but a hollow shell. But while a material independence, based on money, provided mainly by the Government or the missions, was promoting an unindigenous oligarchy, Christianity was imposing great changes among the ordinary people.

SOME EFFECTS OF MISSION INFLUENCE

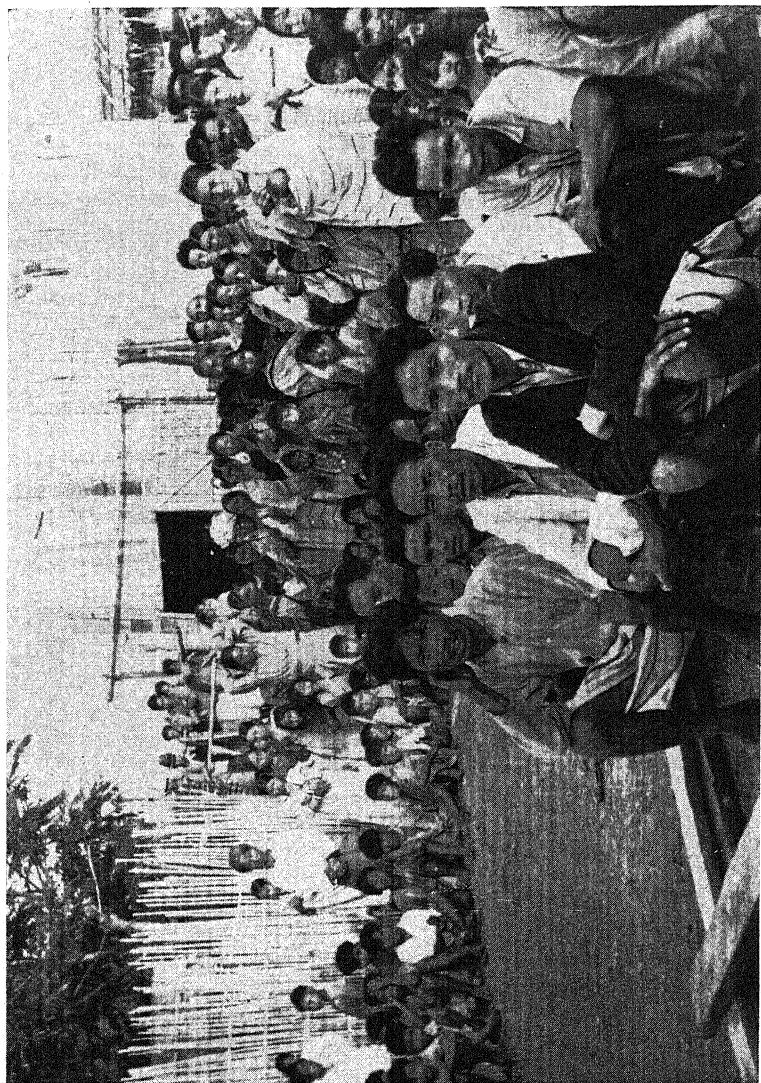
The changes which were taking place among the Lushai villagers were greatly due to missionary fervour, infused through salaried deputies, operating among a people who had never been subject to any firm or powerful priestly class. Christianity, in addition, offered hopes of protection from Government, through the advocacy of the European missionaries, who, after all, had caused the furore over the Bawi question recorded in Chapter V, and who had secured the sanctity of the Sabbath Day, and who could represent hardships, real or imagined, to the "ruling white Chiefs". Success was also facilitated by the fact that Christianity was, from the economic or material point of view, not a costly religion, nor has very much been demanded of the convert, except regular church attendance and the giving up of Zu, if he or she happened to be a Zu drinker. We have already understood the close association between education, salaried jobs, and Christianity. Also within the Christian orbit a Lushai could, it was readily seen, acquire a status of material and cultural advantage, which had not been easily possible within the indigenous social framework.

There was no organised official opposition to the mission approach to the people, neither was this even desirable. But with twenty European missionaries working almost

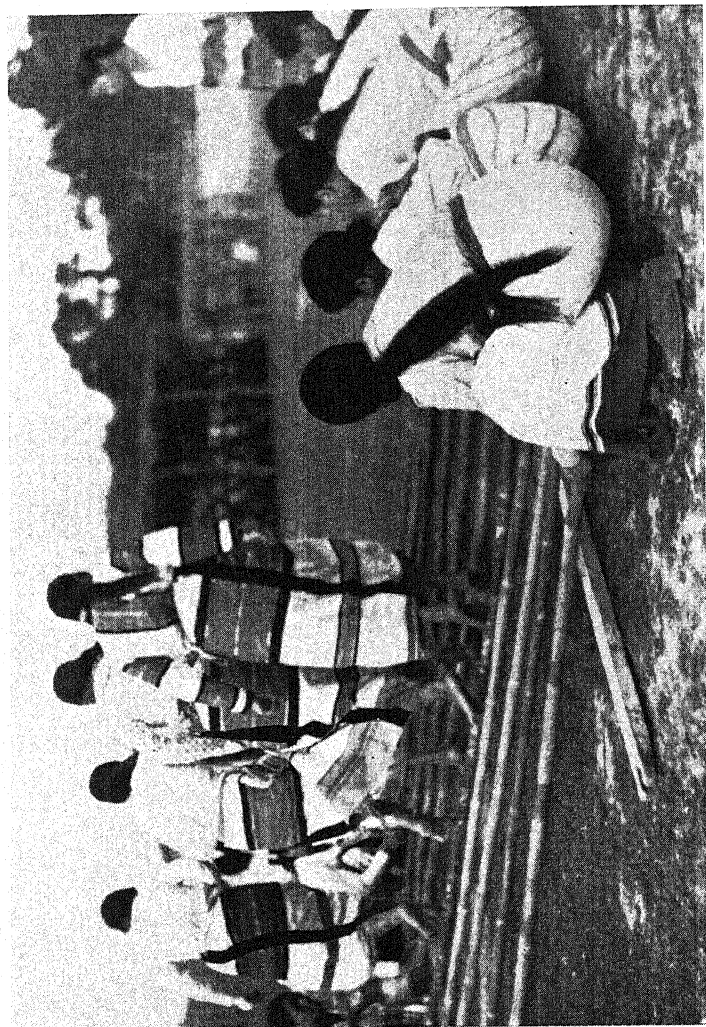
unchecked, and along lines often unknown to the administration, they certainly had a very clear run in the face of but two administrators, or perhaps three, on the Government side. The Government worked through the Chiefs, the traditional rulers, who being, on Lushai standards, comparatively rich, were less ready to give up their standards, their Zu, and their sacrifices. The main mission impact fell upon the ordinary people. Many were too poor to take Zu regularly, as a diet, like the Nagas of the Naga Hills do. Their sacrifice chiefly meant not drinking Zu at sacrifices and feasts, which, in turn, became increasingly rare, as conversion and attendance at church dispensed with this costly need. The missionaries applied themselves with fervour. But fervour is no certain guarantee for scientific treatment of a difficult problem.

In competent enthusiasm lies the key for approach to this delicate problem of building up the strength of a people, who have been persuaded away from their traditional beliefs. But the start has been slow, for some of the earlier missionaries were not above relying on the simple invitation to "contemplate the lilies in the field ! They neither toil not, nor do they spin !" To a people traditionally imbued with the faculty for never considering an earthly future, living only in their insecure present, this conception was an easy burden for them to carry. Whether the Lushai will rise so easily to accept the responsibilities of Christianity remains to be seen. So far he has had a good deal more from Christianity than he has had to give.

In the old days there were countless spirits to placate, and propitiation called for sacrifices, involving Zu and feasts, which at once limited the degree of spirit propitiation open to the poor. There was no certainty of cure for disease, nor for arrival safely at the MI THI KHUA after death. The Christian, many believe, can secure certainty of salvation by regular attendance at the church and a sincere confession of sins. Sacrifices and feasts are no longer a necessity. Medicine is a cheap and more certain cure for disease than the costly sacrifices of old. Without the crippling and constant sacrifices and village feasts, by which a man could rise in the social scale to be well



VILLAGE WELFARE MEETING



THE CHERAWKAN

The bamboos are clapped together at varying intervals comprising a rhythm. The dancers must know just when and where to keep hopping or they will get a nasty rap on the ankles as the bamboos clap clap and catch the learner. This is really a Pawi game more than a Lushai one,

deserved of his Chief and people, a Christian in a salaried job can become materially more powerful even than a village Chief.

The condemnation of Zu drinking by the Lushai church has had definite results on society. It has given a wide impetus to the drinking of tea. But this in turn has also led to an increase in dyspepsia and bowel complaints, as much of the tea drunk is not of the best, and the evil practice soon arose of stewing the tea rather than infusing the tea with boiling water.

Traditional Lushai dances took the form of slow movements accelerated by jerks into a more rapid tempo till the climax was reached, much of the general attraction lying with the vulgarities and, perhaps, obscene patter intoned by the dancers, who would be plied with Zu and encouraged by the handclaps of spectators. It would certainly be difficult for anyone to sustain such a form of dance and merriment on cold water only, and the Lushais have found it no less difficult with the aid of well-stewed tea ! A Lushai will quite openly admit that, without the conviviality of alcoholic support, Lushai traditional dances could make no headway. Unhappily, no healthy substitute has as yet been found by the people for this form of self-expression, and excesses are, in consequence, inclined to occur in the shape of frenzied hysteria within the four walls of the churches, following the lines of what is sometimes known as revivalism. The results can be quite devastating. Some cases concerning this are recorded in detail towards the end of this chapter.

The importance of the individual in the Christian scheme of things, and the belief in the salvation of the Christian soul, if the rules of the Church are followed, have been stressed upon the Lushais by the missions. This has helped Lushai to shake off the shackles of subservience to the unknown multitude of spirits : it has introduced a sense of greater liberty and security. One effect of this has been a loosening of the bonds of customary behaviour. Pre-marital chastity among young Lushai daughters of social climbers was of a high standard in that a girl lost her value, partially, if she became pregnant before marriage. Her lapses with young

men were on the basis of trying to be lucky, even if she was not good. But control by the parents is now less effective, and spiritual fear has become less terrifying, so that lapses are certainly not on the decrease.

Though polygamy is traditional in Lushai, it has depended more on wealth than on anything else. The Lushai Church naturally condemns such practice. It is due to the physiological conditions which happen to prevail that this repression has not given rise to some pathological reactions. The people generally marry early, and by the time the first or original wife is incapable of affording her husband sexual satisfaction the husband has himself probably become incapable. Whether youthful excesses will tend to diminish or intensify, in a generation subject to constant influences demanding abstinence, remains to be seen. At present premature old age is the cause for any lack of chronic nervous disorders brought on by men repressing their natural tendencies, in deference to Church dictates. Cases are now, however, brought to Court, which demonstrate that, even if this is unavoidable, insistence by the Church on abstinence is already generating the hidden subterfuge and encouraging blackmail of the salaried men by the women. The surplus of women over men to the tune of seven per cent. as disclosed by the 1941 Census is unlikely to favour any special calls to continuance.

Owing to the difficulties of contacts, the European missionaries have to work through their salaried workers. Whether such ideas have their sanction or not is not known, but Lushai evangelists have been known to make it clear to their Lushai followers that those who are not Christians of the Lushai Church must surely perish. But confusion arises at the thought of all the generations of those who have gone before. Nevertheless, even where a man may leave the Church as a result of some conflict of interests, he will not ordinarily ever revert to his erstwhile animist practice.

To under-estimate the mental conflict involved in a Lushai trying to comply with the dictates of Christian Churches, in the face of age-long and traditional sanctions, is to miss a basic point of animism, which is the need in

every man's heart for spirit satisfaction, and the feeling of communal popularity. Anthropologists are sometimes inclined to overlook this truth. Such is the man's predicament that, when once he has joined and understood Christianity, he cannot happily revert to his traditional gods. The degree of tenacity evinced will depend on the clan or tribe concerned.

To illustrate the effect of mission contacts in relation to indigenous institutions, the case of the Zawlbuk is convenient. The Zawlbuk is the bachelors' barrack where young boys and youths learned all the discipline that has ever been possible in Lushai social life. Naturally, some of the practices could hardly expect the sanction of strict Church ideas, and this fact has provided the opportunity for Lushai religious leaders to condemn Zawlbuks, in pursuance of the prevalent tendency among Lushais to destroy and eliminate all that dates from a period prior to the Christian era. The Lushai aptitude for imitation and a general sense of inferiority *vis-a-vis* the European combine to accelerate this tendency. Much of the urge lies in a desire to evade the discipline of the past. In the case of the Zawlbuk a special house had to be built and maintained by communal effort. Thus, abolition afforded an instant superficial relief, and, so, adequate grounds for its abolition had to be sought. It was said that village children could not study their books, except in their own homes, or that the parents could control their children better if kept under their care instead of at the Zawlbuk. The facts that only in the most exceptional houses is there even a light after dusk, and that the parents were unprepared to give any guarantees that they would see to it that their children did actually sleep in their own homes, were, naturally, intentionally not ventilated.

It was, however, the Lushai Mission employees who were the prime movers in the matter of abandoning the ZAWLBUK system. The missions were left to view the notion sympathetically, or, alternatively, to oppose it with vigour. The latter alternative basically conflicts with their principle of encouraging self-expression and Lushai initiative, and must be abhorrent to the personnel of the missions.

In the absence of clear opposition from the missions, Lushai churchmen and school teachers would not feel restrained in supporting the abolition of the Zawlbuk in the villages. Such an attitude on the part of the only paid executives in the village creates a situation the Chiefs have to face. Where the influence of the pastors and teachers has caused the disuse of the Zawlbuk, is a Chief likely to compel its maintenance by his villagers, who do not intend to use it? It is in this way that a Chief, playing a lone hand, is in no position to insist on old customs, if the Church and educational mission teachers have cast their spell over the people to adopt other ways of living. If he did, he would merely lose his villagers, who would migrate to a more easygoing village. Some of the European missionaries have themselves been aware of the harm which can be done by an irresponsible abandonment of social practice, and, in the case of the Zawlbuk, a conscientious effort has been made to encourage its preservation under a different organisation, called the Young Lushai Association, originally initiated by the Rev. David Edwards, B.A. This move has a sound anthropological basis as constituting an inevitable adaptation, in the face of irresistible and new forces, even though these new forces have emanated from mission ranks.

LUSHAI SUPPORT OF THE CHURCH INSTITUTIONS

We know there are a score of European missionaries at work on sustained lines, backed by fluid funds, and who are, practically speaking, free from the personal responsibility for the outcome of their actions, preaching, propaganda, or experiments among the people. They can, within the statutory laws of the country, operate *carte blanche*. They collect funds from the people, sometimes in excess of the taxes demanded by Government. They are spared some of the repressions born of a budgetting system which precludes provision of finance for at least a year, perhaps two, from the inception of the need. Some of the collections hoped for by one mission may be of interest.

At the New Year rice, arum bulb, pumpkins, and produce which may be readily available, are given according to the

ability of all. The total gifts are then converted to cash through the good offices of those who are materially better off, and the sale proceeds are applied to the upkeep of the Lushai Church. A collection is also made at the time for the Church Authorities at Headquarters, the contribution suggested and desired being fixed at one-tenth of the donor's produce. In early autumn a collection is made for the Christian poor, people subscribing vegetable produce much in the same way as at the New Year. Each Sunday there is a small collection of cooked rice or other gifts to help towards the Bible Women and Sunday School expenses, while collections are open monthly for the spread of the Gospel. The aggregate of these collections can well reach a value equal to, if not well in excess of, the Government's only demand of three shillings annually. The breadth of their appeal limits the degree of support possible for the nation's needs outside those of the Church.

But, dealing with the general question of overseas missions, it is not usually known by the administrations what instructions are given to missions operating in backward areas by their home directorates. The principle whereby an administration fails to secure some definite limitation on mission activity in areas which are not politically independent is surely wrong. No administration would seek to interfere in any doctrinal practice by a mission which was operating with full sanction unless or until a breach of the peace threatened. But an administration should seek to limit the degree of licence afforded by missions in any control by the natives of mission enterprises. Where the administration in its own affairs is unable to sanction increased measures of decentralisation, their sanction by missions cannot but create a political problem through repercussions in fields outside the immediate control of missions. In the case of school or church management committees, where the European missionaries allow themselves to be demoted from their position of leadership, not only might their main claim for residence come into question, but they thereby give a stimulus to the people to seek for a status which may be neither timely nor locally appropriate. It is in such ways that the "suitable idea

fails to get in first". When we recall that some missionaries openly claim that it is their privilege and their prerogative to blaze a trail, and for others to meet the resulting situation, the need for some form of limitation on missionary activity among a backward people becomes a very real matter.

Moreover, it is most unlikely that the comity of missions would take exception to the issue from time to time of concise instructions to their local executives, when or if desired by the administration. The era of non-co-operation with administrations by members of the comity of missions, if it ever existed, is surely passed. But that freedom of action and speech, which may be feasible among a fully emancipated and democratic public, is not feasible in the case of missionaries working among a backward people. There is need for the acceptance of this fact, once and for all. Where friction did exist between missions and Government Executives, the acceptance of this principle would help to terminate it.

So far as Lushai is concerned, relationship between the missions and administrative executives could not be on a more healthy or sound basis. Nevertheless, failure to supervise and limit mission enterprise is incompatible with control or guidance of the people's cultural development.

EMOTIONAL POTENTIAL OF THE LUSHAI CHURCH

It must now be clear to the reader that, in contemplating Lushai, we must recognise that all these tendencies accumulate to form a constant persuasion towards the way of living sponsored by the missions. This persuasion could easily, in whole or in part, at any time result in a political situation in which Lushais, who are under strong Church influence, might try to assert a challenge, based on spiritual power, to dominate the temporal sphere. If this happened, it is doubtful if the missionaries would find it easy to exert the necessary effective leadership. This aspect of an accumulation of influence by Lushai employees of the missions has to be recalled when we come to explore means by which the Administration can build up a machinery which will ensure more definitely that the "suitable idea" may have

a still better chance of impregnation. Assam's administration of her hill tracts has been based all along on very sound principles, but the time has come for a revival of interest in Parliament's approach to the peculiar and delicate problem in general of administering peoples following a totally different form of life to that followed by us at home, but yet who are totally dependent on us till either we cast them aside or nourish them to some status more in tune with that enjoyed by their neighbours.

We must never overlook the fact that in the Lushai temperament we have to deal with a very intense and emotional potential. The deduction is that it will always be far wiser to assist him openly in his searches for spiritual satisfaction rather than to countenance any gesture which might detract from his self-confidence. This will often demand considerable forbearance. One young Lushai was found carrying a Bible under his arm, and when asked if he did not consider that Christianity, as represented by the complicated theological and doctrinal approach, was too complicated for simple Lushais, his answer was that the reason he carried about a Bible was, not that he knew anything about it, but that he had heard that Christ had some disciples, whose duty it was to spread His sayings, but that he did not know much about what these sayings were. Further interrogation disclosed that he had forsaken an elderly mother and father, in dire need of their strong son's customary and traditional assistance. It was in order to imitate his picture of Christ's disciples, by moving from one Lushai village to another, incidentally cadging hospitality as it came, that he went about carrying his Bible under his arm. The picture from a distance may have seemed beautiful, but, when seen a little nearer, the cracks and illusions disclosed the love of variety, the masquerade of the poseur. Nevertheless, to avoid resentment and despair a friendly understanding is vital, even if difficult.

SHORT RECAPITULATION OF THE LUSHAI BODY POLITIC

The importance of incidents cannot be fully valued unless their background is clearly comprehensible. It is hoped that what we have been reading gives something

of a picture of this background. Before proceeding to disclose the way matters can go in present-day Lushai, let us recapitulate a little of what we have seen happening in Lushai during these first forty years of contacts.

An agricultural people numbering about one hundred and fifty thousand live in villages scattered over eight thousand square miles of country subject to the jurisdiction of hereditary Chiefs. Within most villages is a school teacher paid by the missions and immediately responsible to the missions. In some villages, in addition, there are salaried Church Executives. In none of these villages does Government maintain any salaried worker. Contacts between Chiefs and Government Executives are necessarily very limited. Touch with the villages can only be established through Chiefs, who receive no special training or teaching in up-to-date administrative methods, beyond that which Government Executives can apply very spasmodically. The influence of Government, then, is chiefly represented by the ultimate power of force. Operating in the midst of these people are about twenty European missionaries, bound by no limitation, beyond the ordinary law of the land, but depending greatly for their general success upon retaining the goodwill of a backward people. The third element is represented by the oligarchy, privileged salaried, and, therefore, materially powerful, most of the members of which are on the missions' pay-roll, are Church Executives, or in the employ of Government, in which case they are probably, in any case, subject, spiritually, to the Lushai Church.

The main impacts in the villages, therefore, emanate from the missions through the village teachers, spreading the conception of the importance of the individual and of the personality. This influence leads towards individualism. This individualism flourishes at the Headquarters Centres of Aijal and Lungleh, stimulated by the influence of the Lushai oligarchy, which is naturally imbued with the thrill of seeking independence of the Chiefs and freedom from customary communal discipline, their motivisation being based on their superior academic experience, often cemented by acceptable salaries. It is this oligarchy that

can well be called articulate Lushai, for, whether it possesses the competence or authority to speak for Lushai or not, it certainly has the advantage of wider academic experience to carry it through.

As the missions have to rely on retaining the goodwill of the people, it is only natural that they must court specially this articulate class, and this is sometimes done by withholding definite censure or castigation where such is, in the opinion of the Administration, their proper due. We cannot blame the missionaries for this, but the Administration would be open to blame if it did not take count of this situation. It is only by taking count of every aspect of Lushai life that we can, in a later chapter, attempt to suggest the remedies. How matters work out in practice may be shown by two incidents, the first concerning a bicycle, trivial enough in itself, but important in principle, and the second, concerning a situation arising from a misadventure in the conduct of Church affairs.

INCIDENT OF THE BICYCLE

There is in Aijal and its surrounds a two or three mile length of road on which it is possible to use a bicycle. Aijal can produce about forty bicycles, but Lushai is young in experience to gauge traffic problems, dangers, and speed. After representations by the Mission, an order had to issue to the Mission, the Educational Department of the Mission, and all other important quarters, that children were not to be permitted to ride adults' bicycles. Before two years had elapsed the son of one of the missionaries' servants was so badly injured by a bicycle being faultily ridden that, for some days, if not weeks, there was fear for the child's total recovery. The Mission, quite properly, again pressed for greater care concerning the riding of bicycles. The Superintendent at once caused all bicycles to be registered, and called all bicycle owners to the Court and delivered to them a personal, recorded address, asking for their mutual co-operation for the public good, and at the same time warning all of the drastic consequences which might attend deliberate misuse of bicycles. A copy of the recorded notice in Lushai was posted up on the notice board for all

to see and to know. From time to time fresh registrations were made on applications submitted by Lushai townsmen.

Four years later a child was seen on the open road riding an adult's bicycle, his right leg through the frame under the cross-bar, his body weighing to the left with the bicycle listing to the right at a compensatory angle. The child's chin reached to the level of the seat. Process at once was issued against the owner. What other course could possibly lie open, if the Public is to be protected? It may be recalled that the great civilisation represented by London was testily pressing for protection against "scorchers" within but five years of the start of this century!!

It transpired that the bicycle belonged to the Head Master of the local Educational Mission Middle School. He was summoned, and offered as his defence, firstly, that he did not know the rules, and, secondly, that the child, his son, could ride the bicycle. In the face of such pleading by a graduate—the Head Master was a Bachelor of Arts—it was considered advisable to request a Mission representative, a Lushai or another, to attend at the Court because the Head Master was a Mission employee. At the examination the Court had the greatest difficulty in eliciting agreement from the representative that ignorance of the law was no defence, and that the contention that the child could ride the bicycle was clearly ridiculous, even if true in fact. The child had to ride on two separate occasions, before the representative acceded to the obvious conclusion that such a child riding such a bicycle could easily run into another child, or animal, or even have such a fall that he himself might be seriously injured.

The significance of the case lies in the fact that by his attitude the representative raised the inference that he placed undue importance on the need for defending the Head Master at all costs, on the ground that he must have been quite ignorant of any wrong which he had committed, the representative being at first disinclined on this occasion to reiterate without reserve the Mission demand that the public should be protected from such dangers. Thus rules and orders, properly instituted, in a measure on the motion of the Mission, failed to meet with full support when a

member of the oligarchy became involved. It was an example of the individual and the personality being of more importance than the community, it being overlooked that a community should not gratuitously be exposed to dangers in order that one of the oligarchy, or any person, for that matter, be permitted to claim a privilege for which clearly he was unfit and too uneducated, in the wider sense, to be permitted to enjoy. The importance of this case is that it shows the difficulties of personal and directional leadership by a District Officer if outspoken and effective support to him, in all legal and necessary action, is not convincingly forthcoming. The Missions are sometimes disinclined to be definite in their support of Government's actions, perhaps because they fear the retort from Lushai that they are no better than the Government in their ordering of matters Lushai!! The Administration should be such that the Missions cannot but stand publicly and wholeheartedly in its support, while the Administration should withhold no support from the Missions in all matters lawful and constructive.

REVIVALISM

The second incident is the more important, and it illustrates clearly the need for the Administration having control over the Missions' methods. The incident also shows the need of holding the Missions responsible for the outcome of their teachings and their actions.

The Lushais have many excellent qualities, but they are emotional, suffer in a degree from an inferiority complex, and are yet sufficiently vain not to be averse to exhibitionist tendencies. The practice of revivalism offers considerable scope to such people. Indigenous dances, we may recall, have nearly died out. But a lively, gyrational, and trembling movement performed in the Houses of the Lord has sanction among many of the people as evidence that the Holy Ghost has entered into one or more of a congregation. The trouble, however, lies in the fact that this is not an indigenous form of Lushai movement. It is a product from outside, possibly Wales; but the motive force lies in the generation of a sense that the Holy Ghost has entered

into the heart of the performer. Songs or prayers may accompany the early stages as the individual answering the call stands up in the chapel, among the congregation. Space is made, and the performer commences to move the feet and perhaps to give forth words. The tempo of the dance increases, the accompanying drum beats accelerate, the dancer, perhaps a woman or young girl, ever more energetic in her movements, stomach wobbling, breasts swollen in ecstasy, eyes dilating, all towards the final paroxysm of surrender, abandon, and dementia, which ultimately causes exhilarated supporters to catch the performer as she falls in some helpless swooning of hysteria. It has been said that this expression of the soul has taken the form of a spiritual strip-tease. For instance, one lady, who later went mad, stood in transcendant nakedness in a certain House of God, while, no doubt, the fate of many a lassie has been sealed beyond repair, as a result of such emotion. Such behaviour has no licence from the Missions, but its disciplining presents an embarrassing problem to them.

THE KELKANG INCIDENT

The Kelkang incident arose through a variation of this revivalism cult. Three fairly hard-boiled Lushais put their heads together and conceived the great idea that it would be possible to capitalise the words of the Bible, where it was recorded that the people "spoke in Tongues". They mastered the initial technique of presenting a demoniacal abandon to represent within them what they called the spirit of the Holy Ghost, and daily they proceeded to impress their neighbours by a show of much garbling and uttering in tongues, the meaning of which was unknown to themselves or anyone else. They claimed they were the medium through which God spoke to men, and that they had no choice in the selection of the words used, and that only when the Holy Spirit moved could they make such utterings.

The whole affair met with resounding success, and soon they came to exercise a spiritual power over many of the people. Then they thought they would go one better, and they conceived the idea of opening the Bible at random and seeking some direction on the open page. If the

passage referred to sacrifices, they would call on the people to deliver up their animal stock. The passage might refer to the raining of manna from the skies. They gave out that there was no need for people to cultivate any more because God would rain rice down from the skies, and the end of the world was fast approaching. This disclosure led to the children failing to attend the school because it was clearly a waste of time to learn lessons at school when there would shortly be no more world for their use. All this proved beyond the ability of the local mission teacher and churchmen to control. The village Chief was an old-world Chief of the old type, but such affairs had no precedence in all his histories and experience, and he had no means of knowing how to tackle this spirit about which he was quite ignorant.

The pastor, whose duty it was to supervise his churches, failed to make any impression, and was, in fact, hounded out of his own pulpit in the Kelkang village chapel. He did not even apprise his seniors of what was going on.

At last, when more and more people were falling victims to this extraordinary situation, and when men and women were turning Christian overnight, the Chief, who had been confined in his own house, sent off one of his advisers secretly. This man travelled fast three days across country back to Headquarters, normally ten marches away. He reported the state of affairs to the Superintendent at Headquarters, and stated further that the movement was about to spread on a wide scale through many other villages. Within thirty-six hours the Superintendent started out, happily with an escort of Gurkha riflemen of the First Battalion of the Assam Rifles in charge of a Havildar, since promoted to Subedar Sahib.

In due course the party reached a camp within eleven miles of Kelkang, at about midday one Saturday. On that Saturday night the ringleaders got wind of the presence of the Superintendent in camp eleven miles away. That night in the chapel the ringleaders gave out that if the Superintendent interfered with the words of the Holy Spirit he should be killed. In order to achieve this satisfactory intention the ringleaders announced that they would dance

about in their usual demoniacal way when the Superintendent arrived. It would not be long, so they argued, before the Superintendent would get angry and shout "Damn"!! This was to be the signal for one of them to rush the Superintendent and to slap him on the face when all, without exception, were to jump at him, knock him down, and trample him underfoot. This plan, it was explained, had the merit that the Superintendent would surely be killed, and none would be able to name the man who had killed him!!

However, these plans all miscarried as, providentially, contrary to the advice of the escort, the Superintendent decided to march from camp at midnight on Saturday night and to arrive on Sunday morning at dawn to take all the village by surprise. All went according to plan, and on arrival, within a few minutes, two sepoys were on duty outside the chapel, to guard against its being made a stronghold by the Kelkang people, others went to houses known to contain guns, and the houses which it was thought contained the ringleaders were surrounded. Within fifteen minutes all was complete except for the absence of the main ringleader. He was reported as "Having gone out to the Wilderness to Pray". So men were sent out to search on the higher grass knole behind the village and without difficulty he was arrested.

All the way down to the camp a mile away this man clutched a Bible and jumped about with dazed unseeing eyes like a hysterical monkey, talking in tongues as he went. His appearance was suggestive of some creature from the Nether World, or some cursed victim of Zoanthropy. On arrival at the camp one mile away this individual was told he could choose his own course of action. If he persisted in his gesticulation there would be no food. If he behaved normally, his family would be permitted to visit him and to feed him. He chose the latter course.

The trial of the parties was taken up at once. Witness after witness came up with ribs and chest bones outlined under stretched skins, people emaciated with weeks of misguided abandon. It took ten solid days to drive a little sense into the folks. The chief ringleader behind

the scenes, rather than go to jail with the others, eventually chose to announce to all that they should abandon this method of claiming to be filled with the Holy Ghost. He thus evaded arrest. His Excellency the Governor, with his usual wisdom, exercised his clemency at the first signs of matters having returned to normal, and the incident was closed with no violence nor with any injury which was in any way permanent.

The Mission were good enough to transfer their pastor to another sphere of activity. The Chief was punished in sorrow, but unavoidably, as whatever his excuses, he had let his whole village fall into the hands of these sorcerers, who had capitalised tradition with the help of the Bible and Christianity.

This revivalist movement was fairly widespread at the time, and the Missions were trying faithfully to keep it within the bounds of decency. But what they never bargained for was that, not having outlawed at the very outset an unindigenous and clearly unhealthy manifestation of wild Lushai within a Christian framework, the day would surely come when their own Lushai Church leaders and colleagues would deny to their European preceptors their right to give a final ruling on what the Bible did or did not sanction. The implications of any surrender of directional authority to mere novices in the intricacies of those doctrinal confusions, which make up institutional Christianity, can readily be understood.

FURTHER REVIVALIST INCIDENTS

On one occasion the Superintendent received a report from a Chief, which read as follows :—

Liana, I may state, is a Church Elder, of Sailen village. He has just started on a tour, planned to last for one year, with a certain woman, called Chawni, who is the wife of Mankhama. Mankhama has already gone once to recall his wife, Chawni. He got her to return, and Liana also returned, both, however, stating that it was the clear direction of the spirit that they should go on tour together, in default of which serious consequences to the families would surely result. It might even mean a death in one

of the families, it was claimed. Within the month, Liana and Chawni started out again on this wilful tour. As they left Sailen village, Liana's own wife lay seriously ill ; Liana and Chawni gave out that even though Liana's own wife was lying seriously ill the tour could no longer be postponed. Not long after, Liana's wife died, while her husband was touring.

Some of these revivalist people are having sexual intercourse with others' wives freely, without any consideration for their own families and children.

Signed.

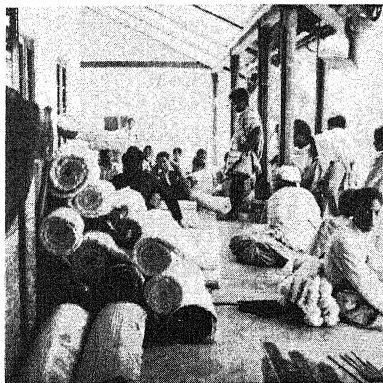
Chief of Sailen.

This matter was taken up by the Superintendent concerned—although this was not easy. The Mission was asked for a report, if they had sanctioned their church elder going on such an itinerary. The reply was in the negative. As the parties concerned were clearly capable of breaking the peace with behaviour that had no one's sanction, they were called on to agree to stay in Sailen village for a period of one year, in the first instance, or to submit to jail.

The case disclosed particular moral rot, because Chawni's own husband was a revivalist, and it was only on this account that, without loss of face, he could not have brought a suit for divorcing his wife, Chawni, which he would ordinarily have been bound to do by custom, as well as inclination. It was on this account that the Chief recorded the closing sentences of his report.

In another case, a revivalist was walking along a hill-track with his brother and a relative, who was humping a Lushai basket on his back. Stealthily the revivalist extracted a knife from the basket on the back of the unsuspecting relation. Without any more ado, the revivalist set upon the relative, cutting him with the knife twice on the head, once on the arm, and once on the shoulder, whereon the man ran for his life, the revivalist's brother bravely engaging him till he himself fell after receiving a slight cut on his hand.

When the revivalist was seized, in due course, he had nothing more to say than that he had no reason at all for wanting to attack or kill his relative, but that ever since

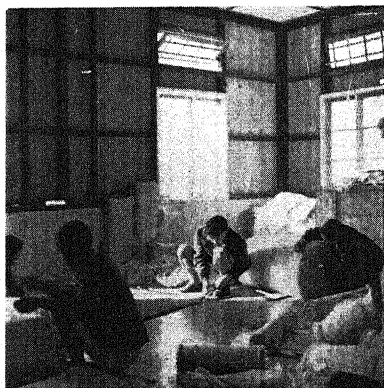


The Veranda of the residence of the Superintendent, Lushai Hills for two years before the building of Reid House.



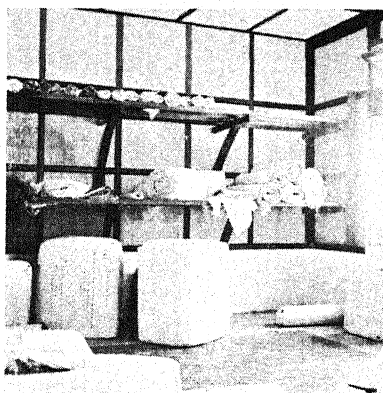
Mrs. Joint Organiser sorting and grading dusters—each one having been checked for weave and then washed and ironed.

Rugs and many graded dusters can be seen on the store racks.

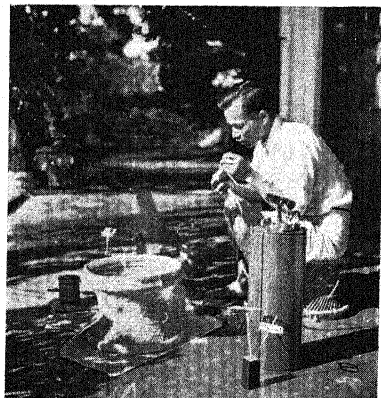


A busy day at Reid House.

The man on the left is sewing and sealing and addressing bundles for export. The far man is trimming up a cotton pile rug prior to packing. Rugs rolled and tied ready for enclosing may be seen in the right foreground.

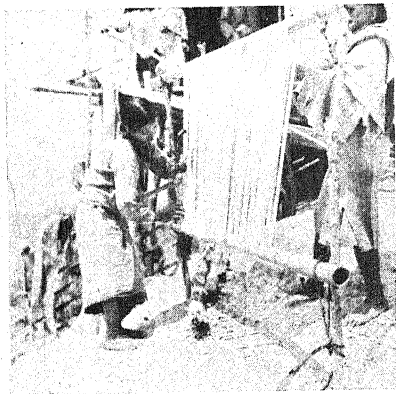


Bundles of rugs ready packed and addressed awaiting freight.



Duco finisher at work painting cane seats, belt buckles, and other articles.

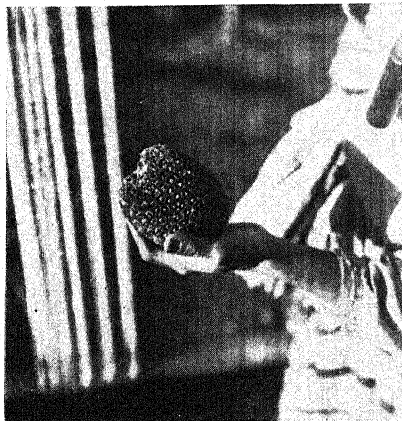
COTTON STARCHING



Separating cotton which has been prepared in rice water to make it convenient for use when weaving.



What the lady looks like close up with her woman's pipe, from the bottom container of which she will give her "boy friend" the nicotine water therein.



What she uses—the pandanus.

he had got really excited over this revivalist movement he had felt himself getting light in the head ! !

He was sent to jail to cool down for a period of six months. But there are a number of such cases among Welsh Mission Christians from time to time, which cannot but be considered as constituting the gravest of menaces to the general peace of the land.

Part of the cause for this defiance of mission sanction may lie in the fact that this Mission had practised what was almost equality of status in various Educational and Religious Committees. To admit at this stage that Lushai is qualified to pass final and authoritative opinions on matters not indigenous to the country and her traditions is to incur inevitable risks. Moreover, it sanctions a line of dealing in Lushai, which is denied by the wisdom of Government. This is another way of saying that the Missions at times may have salved their consciences on the altar of expediency to avoid the responsibility for exercising authority against their public's wishes.

The lesson of the Kelkang incident is that any administration would be well advised to hold the Missions responsible for the outcome of their policies, and actions taken in pursuance of these policies. It is the Administration which has to mete out punishment, or restore law and order, sometimes by drastic action. It is most important that the Administration should try to order its affairs in such a way that it is not open to prejudicial criticism as a result of drastic action necessitated by conditions which were not of its making.

In what way these desirable results may be attempted may be left to a later chapter, in which an attempt is made to portray a technique, which has been devised in the Lushai district of Assam, to provide an invitational machinery with which the stresses and strains, resulting from these first forty years of contacts, can be better balanced and regulated. Only in an approach with a comprehensive and clearly defined shape will much hope lie for an ordered future. The technique is necessarily subject to the limitations imposed by an absence of any directive based on legislative decree.

EXCELLENT WORK OF THE MISSIONS

Considering, however, the responsibility which, whether realised or unrealised, attaches to any European from his or her contact with the Lushai, it is a great tribute indeed to the wisdom of individual missionaries of Lushai that so little confusion has, in fact, arisen. Also, considering the urge that must be within their hearts, it is a great tribute to the sincerity and care of these missionaries that they have been so cautious in their assaults on cultural Lushai. These have, we must admit, in all fairness, been confined to those which were unavoidable for so long as the Missions retained the set principles of their inspiration. Their position has always been essentially compromised by the genius of astute Lushais playing off one organisation against another. If the Superintendent's actions gave cause for fair, or mischievous, criticism, the missionaries were exposed to traps, and when some action by the missionaries appeared outrageous to the same astute Lushais, they would lay a trap for the Superintendent. If this method had achieved early successes, its efficacy has been infinitely reduced in recent years, due to the staunch loyalty which has characterised mutual relations between the Superintendent and the missionaries. It is hoped that this has come to stay and that, standing together on all matters vital to good government and administration, it may be increasingly possible to secure solidity and strength among the people to whose good service both parties are so seriously linked.

INEVITABLE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY OF SOME KIND

To show how easy it is to lay on the missionaries the blame for every and each intemperate turn that whimsical Lushai may take, under the influence of the foreigner within her midst, we may turn to one interesting experience.

This concerned a Chief called Rachi, the most intelligent of the erstwhile most feared Lakher tribes. He has never been outside the Lushai Hills. His territory, with that of his three co-Chiefs, was formally taken over in 1930, the area only being visited by Government Officers under an Assam Rifles escort, even up to 1940. In thinking

of Rachi we can with safety look upon him as being a man uncontaminated by any exotic experiences. In conversation in 1938 with the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, he told me that much of the cause for raiding in the old days lay in their ignorance of the other fellow's ideas on life and his customs. Freer intercourse with all under the Pax Britannica had given a sense of physical security. He advocated now every effort towards still freer intercourse among the people assisted by a language common to all, supporting a set of customs understood and followed by all. He gave it as his opinion that these advantages could best be attained through the medium of Christianity. He particularly stressed his dislike of emotional and rapid conversions, and was doing what he could to prevent it. At the same time, he gave it as his opinion that the succeeding generation would be unable to resist Christianity, and that it would all be for the best. He illustrated his case by pointing out how irresistible was the impression made on his villagers when they went out to trade and met cleanly dressed Lushais who were well versed in much that was astounding to the Lakhers. He said such experiences could not but bring home to his people their own backwardness, compared with others, who lived so comparatively close at hand. His villagers could not but lose faith in their own spirits, when others following Christianity became so advantageously placed. In short, their confidence became undermined. The inference is that what is needed is a practical Christianity of the simplest kind, prepared to bide its time standing for easy compromise, in the faith that in the long and distant future the people themselves would develop along lines of natural expression. Such a compassionate approach could, or should, receive the political support of an administration, which in itself would vest in its application a confidence and universality that would go far to strengthening a people faced by the sudden realisation that the feelings in their hearts towards the Deity no longer possessed the certainty of age-long tradition. It is to the credit of missionaries in Lushai that they have, in achieving some of their aims, avoided that neurosis among the people which has so often resulted in their decimation. It is a great

tribute to the missions in Lushai that their teaching and influence have been so compassionate and considerate. They have made mistakes, it is true. Their administrative and social usefulness will depend greatly upon the ability of the missionaries and their supporters to correlate Christianity and Lushai agriculture, homes, industry, schools, and in fact every and all the practical experiences of Lushai life. This task will be difficult, and a more severe task than securing a hold over the people through theological emotionalism at the hands of a professional body of Lushai religionists. But if the Missions do fail great lawlessness may well prevail.

DISTRICT BUDGET

Before going on to examine Government's position in detail, in the face of all these impacts, let us acquire some idea of the Government expenditure and receipt budget. The figures given are only approximate. The expenditure side reads as follows :—

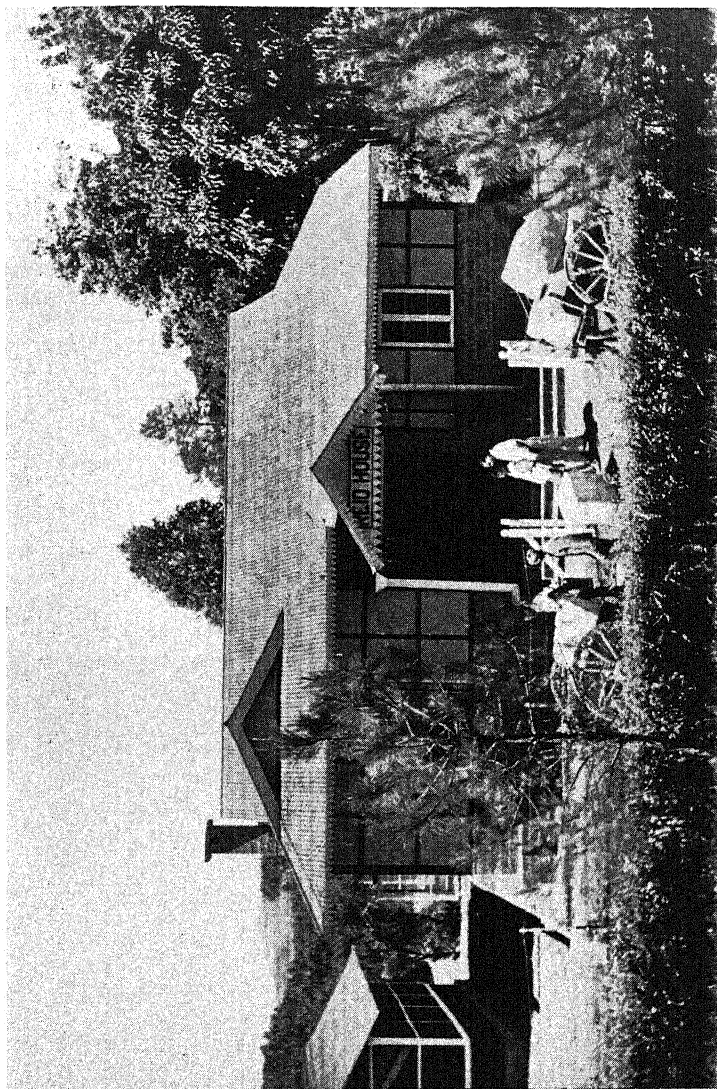
General Administration :

	£
Pay and Allowance, Gazetted Officers ..	3,200
Establishment concerned	2,940
Contingencies	1,330
Total	<u>£7,470</u>

Of the sum, £1,330, under contingencies, £1,000 is the cost of maintaining a Porter Transport Corps, maintained to meet essential Government transport needs, and to reduce calls on the Lushai population to meet forced labour. This constitutes a concrete token by the Government in Assam to preserve the people from forced labour, and is characteristic of the Government's solicitude for the people specially entrusted to her.

Education Grants

	£
Grant-in-aid to Mission, North	365
South	213
Lakherland	25
Expenditure on sons of Chiefs	70
Total	<u>£673</u>



REID HOUSE,
named after the Patrons, His Excellency Sir Robert Reid, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., and Lady Reid,



A CORNER OF THE MAIN BAZAAR AT AJJAL

Public Works

Staff and establishment charges	..	..	£
Contingencies	..	..	1,640
Repairs and Works	..	..	73
	..	..	6,000
Total	..	..	<u>£7,713</u>

Forest Department

Staff Charges	..	..	..	£
Boundary demarcation	..	..	..	140
	..	..	..	58
Total	..	..	..	<u>£198</u>

Police Department

Staff Charges, Personnel	..	..	..	£
Contingencies and Rations	..	..	..	1,015
	..	..	..	364
Total	..	..	..	<u>£1,379</u>

Medical Department

Senior Staff Charges	..	..	..	£
Doctors and Staffs	..	..	..	890
Contingencies	..	..	..	3,025
	..	..	..	1,410
Total	..	..	..	<u>£5,325</u>

Public Health

Vaccinations and Staff	..	..	..	£
Contingencies, which are on suspense account, for the sale of quinine recoverable from the Lushai villagers	150
	116
Total	<u>£266</u>

Jail Department

Establishment and contingencies	£410
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Total Expenditure in all £23,434

Against that expenditure, receipts total £9,700 made up roughly as follows :—

Forest Receipts	..	..	..	£
Collection of House Tax at three shillings per year per house of several persons	..	..	..	5,200
Rents from Buildings	..	..	..	3,000
Surcharge on residence at Headquarters in the case of those not in Government or Mission employ	..	..	..	260
Recovery of Transport hire in case of demands by non-Government agencies	..	..	..	140
Miscellaneous receipts from grazing, fishing, fines, garden produce, stall rents, Boat taxes, Pound collections, Registration fees	..	..	..	126
	..	..	..	374
Total	..	..	..	<u>£9,100</u>

Income Tax (Payable to Central Government) .. £600

Excess of Expenditure over Receipts is the difference between £23,434 and £9,100, or £14,334.

This figure, £14,334, is an important figure because this really represents the token of goodwill by the Indian taxpayer in the year 1936-37 towards meeting the wishes of the British Parliament. These wishes are, presumably, that the people of Lushai should not be included within the complicated direction of the Provincial Legislature, in order that they should be assisted and encouraged themselves to find their own legs and achieve some organisation, through which they could prosper, and grow to hold their own in the wider scheme of things. This measure of assistance works out as an incidence of nearly two shillings per person per year. The important point to notice is that neither the British taxpayer nor the Government of India make any subscription towards this incidence, though the deficit of £14,334 has fallen solely upon the Provincial Council, from whose direction the people are being excluded under the Government of India Act of 1935. That the decision itself to exclude Lushai was sound can be seen by a reference to the Legislature debates, which have been characterised by vicissitudes in which Lushai could not possibly have had any interest or sensible concern.

This expenditure budget does little more than provide the essentials of any Government machine. Nearly 1,000 miles of bridle path are maintained from the public works budget, which also maintains many staging bungalows and all important buildings, residential and institutional, at Aijal and Lungleh. This is all done on a sum of £7,700, of which the staff and the field establishment charges take £1,640. The medical grant is £5,325, out of which a civil hospital of about forty beds is maintained at Aijal, a smaller one at Lungleh, and seven other out-district dispensaries, the actual amount of medicine being dispensed, costing about £1,000. The figure for education has already been discussed. No other item in the expenditure budget calls for any special mention concerning the cultural aspects of their influence. They combine to make possible the work of maintaining law and order. But it must be palpably clear that such a budget can make no pretence

at sustaining an organisation productive of any effective cultural, or specially influential, impacts upon the political or social development of a people living under conditions which are not of their own making.

PARLIAMENT NOT TO BE FORGOTTEN

The ordinary argument put forward by critics, who remain uninspired by the avowed wishes of the British Parliament, is that in return for law and order, and good Government in this respect, it is up to the people to achieve their own development with no further aid. At best this criticism amounts to an assertion which runs counter to the wishes of the British people, so far as these have found expression through Parliament. At worst, it discloses the mentality which has been so incidental in causing two major wars in our time. It discloses a wilful determination that so long as these critics are themselves satisfied personally and so long as backward people can not, or do not, make themselves objectionable, there is no need for any special financial or other sacrifices to be made to bring about an improvement in their lot. But the chastening circumstances of war will surely no longer sanction the principle of equality of opportunity for all, while in practice making an exception of the weak and the coloured peoples of our great and wonderful empire, an empire which can afford to the English-speaking peoples of the world the most entrancing opportunity for furthering the best interests of humanity that the world has ever before offered.

The whole problem of backward people can not be indefinitely shelved, as a family skeleton, in a dreaded cupboard. If a people are backward, how can they have any political acumen? If they have none, surely this must initially be exercised by Government? If Government at home has come to no decision on what the "suitable idea" is, how can it exercise locally, among the people, competent or appropriate political leadership? If there is no competent leadership, a people must founder, as a ship on an uncharted rock. If the Administration does not lead, someone else may conceive "unsuitable ideas", ideas which may well constitute a costly challenge to those entrusted

with, but possibly failing in, the art of Government. The wishes of the British Parliament will have been expressed in vain, as is too often the case, and will continue to be the case until the administration of distant people, under the present British democratic system, is far better secured than it is at present.

NEED FOR RECONSTRUCTION

The Administration itself, however, has had to face acute difficulties during the last half of these forty years' administration in Lushai, consequent upon the passing of the Government of India Act of 1919. From the direct control of a Chief Commissioner, Lushai passed to a Governor in Council, and the bureaucracy found themselves heavily absorbed in an adjustment to conditions of partial autonomy, under the leadership of Ministers as popular representatives of the people. Then came the 1929 slump, with drastic retrenchment. No sooner had some recovery set in, than the clouds over the proposed new Government of India Act began to absorb attention, and the attitude towards Lushai had to be that, until the ultimate status of Lushai was clearly defined, it was not feasible for any fresh expansion to be attempted. At length the present Government of India Act of 1935 became law and created conditions which were bound to react towards some sterility for Lushai, exactly sixteen years after the abandonment of personal rule by the Chief Commissioner of Assam. As we are, in this chapter, concerned with the first forty years of contacts, it is left to the next chapter to discuss the financial implications of this most recent Act.

That the tasks with which officers are faced, while administering a people in remote and obscure areas, often with little or remote understanding guidance, are considerable, may be seen by a perusal of a record of one day in the life of an officer on tour in the Lushai Hills.

8-9 a.m. Formulation of proposals for the consideration of Government for the opening of middle Feeder Schools in the out-district as being a prior necessity to the establishment of a District High School at Headquarters.

Breakfast.

10-12.30. Conference of circle Chiefs involving expression of the Chiefs' needs, and instructions to the Chiefs by the Superintendent of his needs of the Chiefs.

2-3.30 p.m. Writing up of orders necessitated by the Chiefs' conference.

4-7 p.m. Litigation by the villagers involving forgeries, petitions concerning former cases, gun matters, execution of decrees, rewards for wild animals shot in the hunt, finishing with a talk with a Chief to encourage him after he had had a scolding for submitting to a village clique rather than stand up for his own mother.

8.30 p.m., onwards. Correspondence involving :—

1. Passing of Bills for Government grants in aid to missions.
2. Asking the Director of Public Instruction if grants for the year commencing April 1st, had yet been passed by May 15th, no information having been received, yet demands having been pressed locally.
3. Asked if long-standing proposals for Government to contribute to provident funds had yet been sanctioned.
4. Studying of schemes for speedier efforts to attain mass literacy.
5. Consideration of scheme by which certain Civil Government Officers should take up musketry practice in their spare time.
6. Application of executive drive to ensure that five years' experiment in terrace rice cultivation for reduction of pressure on the land is really and sincerely being carried out.
7. Approval of certain personnel to attend a special course on agriculture at the Headquarters of Government.
8. Consideration of a case of personal grievance by a clerk, who considers he should have been chosen before another for a selected post. Reply and orders involve careful count of record of services, qualifications, etc.
9. Consideration of instructions as to whether deaths among German and Italian subjects resident in India should necessarily be reported to the Governments concerned.
10. Consideration of the most recent official price fluctuations, as far as they concern Lushai Hills.

11. Consideration, and approval, and selection of applicants for a Viceroy's Commissioned Rank.
12. Consideration of the difficult and complicated matter of technical recruitment for the Army.
13. Consideration of the position arising out of a Government clerk, on low pay, being called on to pay a high security value, involving the borrowing of money for the purpose from a moneylender at a high rate of interest.
14. Consideration of secret instructions concerning the carriage of papers capable of carrying information to the enemy.
15. Consideration of new instructions for countering the evasion of Press censorship.
16. Issuing of important orders, arising out of an urgent communication of a complicated and detailed nature, for the recruitment of men for the Army.
17. Making of arrangements to ensure that special care is taken against entry to the district by enemy agents of any kind.
18. Steps to counter fifth column activities.
19. Consideration of correspondence to initiate reconciliation of views by interested, but differing, parties on the subject of a new site for a proposed civil hospital at the Sub-Divisional Headquarters.
20. Initiation of correspondence, dealing with the laxity of an officer in his handling of a case of damage by fire to Government property in circumstances which did not seem justified.
21. Disposal of audit notes on the subject of expenditure on public works buildings.
22. Adjudication on a dispute between an incoming and an outgoing incumbent of a Government post concerning a garden.
23. Passing of bills due for payment to contractors on account of work completed, and measured.
24. Dealing with a serious and an emergent report to the effect that the water supply stored in tanks at the District Headquarters is being seriously jeopardised by an untraceable leakage.

25. Awarding of a tender, from a collection of sealed tenders for a major work in connection with the water supply works.
 26. Received for consideration the Police Department Budget, with the allotments made against the demands originally submitted. Where these have been cut, consideration has to be made as to what action or palliative is called for.
 27. Police Department correspondence of a varied nature.
 28. Issue of notices calling for the applications for important posts.
- 12.15 a.m. Bed.
- 5.45 a.m. Leave camp to march 10-15 miles for next destination.

This is not at all an unusual day. It gives little opportunity for instruction to Chiefs, or personal talks, or access to the village people as a whole, and the contact so made has to last until the village may be once again visited, probably by another officer.

It can, however, be readily seen that an officer, who is posted for service of such individual and independent character, could easily throw aside such obligations, and probably would, unless his heart was "in the game".

CONCLUSION

Without entering into a discourse to illustrate the inevitable results of the incompatibilities arising from a direction under the limitation of concurrent and diverse responsibilities, it is difficult to resist the realisation that, while specially selected Government officers have been maintaining the day-to-day business of sustaining the Governmental edifice, it has been left more to the missions to impose cultural and political influence upon the people. The District Officer has still been left by Parliament uncharged as to the aim towards which he should strive. He has been changed from time to time, while the missionaries have usually stayed long. An emancipated people, like the plainsmen are better equipped to develop their own political future. A backward people, like the Lushais, cannot easily start. Their initiation has been left more

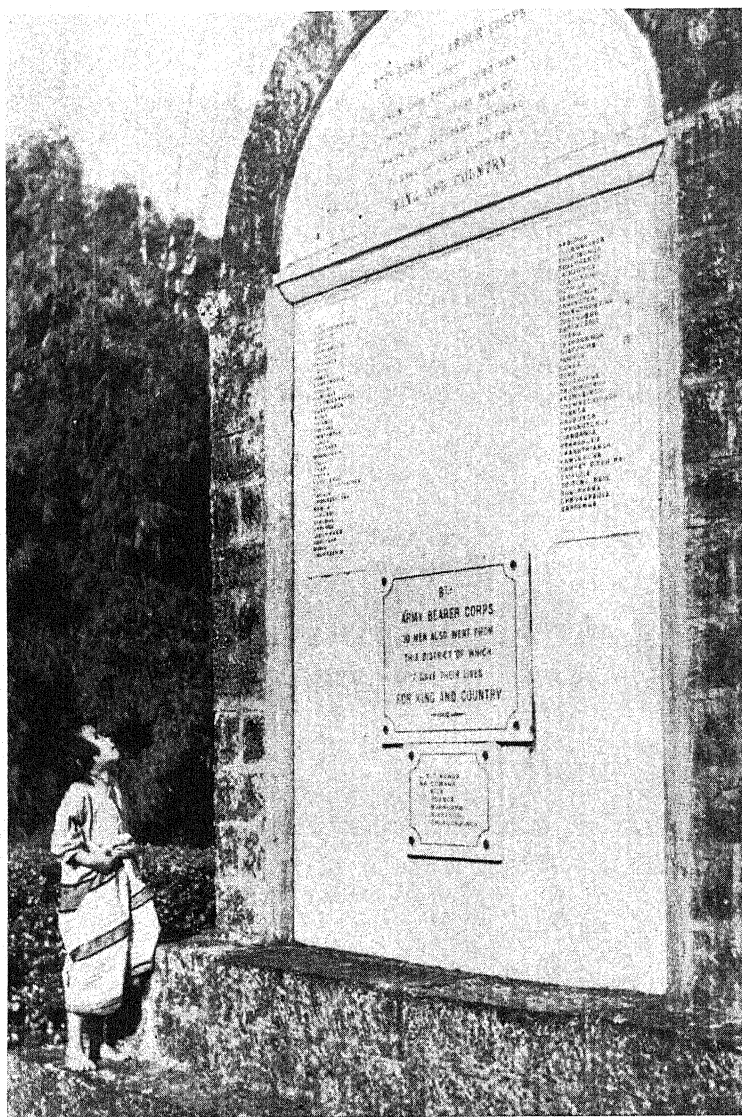
to others, while the Government has been content to maintain law and order and to preserve custom ; good enough ideals, as far as they go, but dangerously inadequate for securing the body politic against "unsuitable ideas", especially those emanating from the sacrifice of particular interests on the altar of departmental expediency, wherever unhappily this may have been the case.

Lushai is indeed at the chrysalis stage, as she enters on her second forty years. There is no time for delay in planning. Execution may have to await better times. There are many territories for which Britain, through Parliament, has accepted responsibility, and which stand in equal, if not much greater need. Assam, indeed, has held high our flag in these last difficult decades. Reconstruction, however, to meet the fast-changing conditions of the world is increasingly pressing.



A VILLAGE FORGE

There are bunches of feathers at the end of the poles that work up and down blowing the fire.



"THAT I MAY HAVE OPPORTUNITY

CHAPTER IX

LUSHAI CHRYSALIS

Adolf Hitler in Mein KAMPF :

"It is a crime against the Eternal Creator to train the dark races for intellectual careers. They should be trained like dogs."

PART I

WE have penetrated far into the minds and lives of the Lushai people, and have perceived some of the complexities of their situation, political, social, and economic. We have an insight into conditions arising from the first forty years of contacts. A second generation of Lushais is growing up within these conditions, under the cultural ægis of a Christianity practised by four or more organisations. In what kind of shape can Lushai emerge from such a chrysalis stage? Has the ordinary man in the street any responsibility for its shape? Is its shape rather to be left to the tempers of chance breezes? Is the most effective theological organisation to have the last say in the shape of new Lushai? Has Parliament any interest in its shape, and, if so, what steps have been taken to sustain this interest? What chances have the people, unaided, of exercising responsible influences towards fashioning their own future? Alternatively, are they to be left, playthings of an irresponsible dictation, harried here and there, sobered to dejection in a maelstrom of confusion? These questions, and many more, suggest some of the problems which call for mature consideration, free from the bias of vested interests and political gymnastics. Many of the problems are already the children of our past indifference. What then of the future? The main object of this chapter is to seek a form of general technique by which a positive, in advance of any static, contribution can be made by our Administration towards a general rehabilitation of a backward people; a technique which can go one better than that of Adolf Hitler's ideas on the training of such a people, and which will provide for their self-development.

The Lushai Hills is an excluded area under the Government of India Act of 1935. The term excluded here implies that Lushai is outside the control of the Provincial Legislatures, responsibility to Parliament for its administration vesting in His Excellency the Viceroy as Crown Representative, who has empowered, on his behalf, His Excellency the Governor of Assam, as Agent to the Crown Representative, to administer the Lushai Hills. Up till 1935 the hills were administered by His Excellency the Governor of Assam in Council, the subject of backward areas being termed as a reserved subject for His Excellency's special interest, this procedure emanating from the reforms under the Government of India Act of 1919. Since His Excellency Sir Robert Reid, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., Governor of Assam, assumed charge of the administration of these Hills, considerable thought and care have been applied to the problems presented by the political and economic changes in our world. His Excellency, to quote but one instance, accompanied by Lady Reid and Staff, made two exhausting tours within these Hills in five years of Governorship, after thirteen years, during which no Governor visited the Hills. For years it was accepted that service by officials in this backward area involved departmental obscurity. This was a measure of the importance of the administration of this particular hill district in the eyes of bureaucracies of the past. His Excellency Sir Robert Reid, however, would see this conception radically changed.

Nevertheless, the Governor of Assam is by no means wholly free to develop his ideas on the needs of these backward peoples due to some ambiguity in the financial machinery conceived by the framers of the Government of India Act of 1935. In theory the Governor can secure essential expenditure for Lushai by earmarking, or charging, provincial finances, arbitrarily, if necessary. In practice, the reverse may well be the case. The Ministries are elected by the popular vote of the people. Their continuity of office must depend upon them retaining the support of their electorates. The Ministries are thus, not infrequently, driven to satisfy popular clamour in favour of nation building schemes. The Ministries do not depend

on any votes from Lushai, nor have they any direct share in the responsibility for the good Government of this land. Can Ministries fairly be expected readily to agree to make over development and essential finance, in the face of deficit provincial budgets, for application to areas in which Parliament, but not they, are, in fact, directly interested? It follows clearly that any Governor, in these circumstances, who plunged deeply into the provincial coffers in order to discharge Parliament's responsibility to these people, might easily cause a Ministerial crisis. In view of the obvious importance of securing success for the 1935 Act, over as great an area of India as possible, it is clear that the interests of a small and unimportant area, like the Lushai Hills, should take a very second place. This, however, does not alter the fact that in the meantime it is not easy to implement the wish of the British people in relation to such an area as the Lushai Hills, due partly to the ambiguity of the financial background. A noble gesture, well intentioned, thus lies partially infructuous. The interests of minorities must, perforce, take a back seat in the face of the major problems of India's constitutional and communal complications.

Further evidence of the precariousness of the availability of finance for these areas under the Act lies in the case where a Congress Ministry remitted a considerable percentage of land revenue income, a measure which must have secured them some political support, at a time, however, when they were about to vacate office. In such circumstances, the chance of obtaining money, which might, in part, have been available for the excluded areas, became even more remote. The Lushais had no benefit from, or say in, the action of the Congress Ministry concerned. The Congress Ministry had not to answer for any disturbances in the excluded areas, consequent upon the failure of essential finance. The position is not wholly satisfactory, and the machinery is ill-balanced. Without appropriate and invigorating treatment a backward people cannot grow strong. Until they become strong they must continue to be a drag and a danger, and hopes of their attaining political equality with their neighbours must progressively recede.

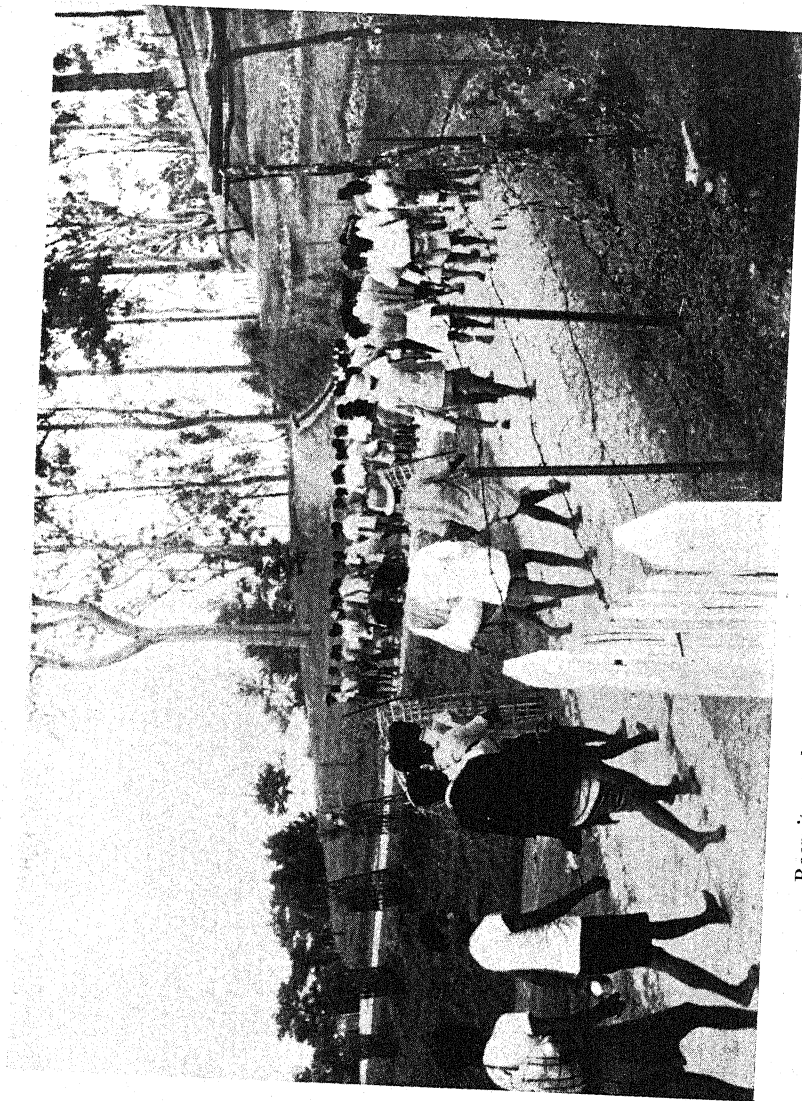
If the British Parliament wished to accept responsibility for the uplift and encouragement of these backward peoples of India, its members might perhaps have been better advised to have secured statutory finance in favour of His Excellency the Crown Representative, thus avoiding the constitutional difficulty inherent in any dependency of these areas on the goodwill of a Provincial Legislature, from which the Act went so far as to exclude specifically such areas from their sphere of responsibility.

The world is at sixes and sevens. The powerful nations through their weaknesses, have invited a challenge from those who are prepared to risk all to gain all. The opportunity arose partly from the fact that a war-weary and victorious British Empire pursued materialism under the visionary security offered by the League of Nations. The delusion could not be maintained. Through fire we have now abandoned wealth that we may gain our souls. The elementary lesson of Christ is being nationally learned. Articulate India demands Dominion status—the right to order her affairs without supervision by the British people. Naturally, Lushai must begin to wonder, “what next?” The only clear thought Lushai has in this matter appears to be “anywhere, as long as we are not forced into the hands of British India against our wishes”. In this alone would lie the justification for the sentiments of Parliament, when they sanctioned that the destiny of some of the “excluded areas” should not immediately lie in the hands of the Provincial Legislatures. But, by immediate implication, the responsibility of the British Government, thereby, became greatly enhanced. This responsibility must surely be accepted on moral grounds, or it must be openly abrogated. The very exclusion of these areas presents provocation to the Indian politician, as a gesture savouring too greatly of the “white man’s burden”. Nevertheless, despite the cynics, there is a white man’s burden, as indeed there is an Indian man’s burden, and this burden is inseparable from the golden freedom of any true democracy. Indians are not likely to quarrel over any regrouping of these areas. There is too much doing on the Indians’ home front. The only thing to be said is that one form



The wife of the Superintendent gives personal gifts of cigarettes, sugar, matches, tea, and tinned milk to recruits leaving Aijal. Such personal gifts were made to over 1,000 recruits.

In foreground is PU SAINGHINGA LUSHAI, Political Assistant, Aijal. He was awarded the British Empire Medal for his part in the war against the Japanese.



Recruits at the start of their long journey to join up in 1942.

of British madness lies in a faculty for putting great and sustained energy into the service of needy people, with the necessary patience, integrity, and forbearance. This faculty has, it is true, lost temporarily much of its value in the crazy rush after the material and selfish standards, which have combined to blacken so much of this century ; there will always be men, who may chose to lose the whole world and yet find life. But, as competition is limited, it is as well to pander to this form of British madness, and to leave them to this task of succouring the lame dogs of India's excluded areas, especially the Lushais and other areas similarly situated.

We have come to see very clearly that Lushai is bound rather to the Mongolian than to the Aryan races. This begs the whole question as to whether it would not be better for Lushai to seek shelter under the Colonial or Dominions Offices, while still remaining within the spheres of Mongolian influence, by a closer association with the Hills of Burma, the Shan States, the Karens, and others with whom Lushai would find so much in common ? The alternative is for Lushai to be handed over to the Aryan influences of India, or Burma, by a scrap of paper, in which they might possibly have no real hand, and for which they might have no real understanding. Lack of definity on this matter is already bringing its own troubles. For instance, although all fall under British influence of varying density, policies and their handling may, and do, differ widely. Basic principles of administration should not ordinarily vary within contiguous territories, which is the case under existing conditions, due to the absence of any sheet-anchor among policies and administrative principles. Logically, the case of such territories should rest in an international keeping, applying common standards of administration and common principles of financial aid. The succouring of all such peoples of similar material standards, in any world of a new order, would seem to constitute a common and proportionate responsibility of all major powers, united in any joint undertaking to preserve law and order throughout the world.

Lushais are seeking, within the ægis of the present

administrative machinery, an education conceived to fit graduates for service in Assam, Bengal, or all India, spheres where any but the Lushai would in natural circumstances have preferential treatment. This education is usually very unproductive in the case of those Lushais, who fail to secure some salaried post in India, within or without Lushai. It is true that, following the policy of community reservations, some posts are at present reserved in the provincial cadres of Assam for excluded area peoples, of whom the Lushais are one. But this practice is creating an anomalous situation, whereby representatives of a people, who are admitted as being backward, are foisted on the far stronger cultures of British India, with which Lushai has little to nothing in common. In the case of the Hindus, for instance, a Lushai is what is conveniently and typically termed an untouchable ! What then are the chances of Lushais being of any real use, in provincial cadres, working far from their homes, with nothing but a college course to rely upon, in the face of every political manoeuvre and every practical difficulty ? The practice would appear to be basically wrong, judged by the fundamental principles of administration. What chances has a Lushai doctor, in his medical career, among the people of British India, so different in origin, habits, and tradition ? The fact is the Lushai, through force of circumstances, is being encouraged to adapt himself to conditions, among which he is not at home, and the plains people have to submit to artificial repressions for political reasons. The position must become increasingly unsustainable. Half a loaf is better than no bread, and it is generous hearted of the Legislatures in the meantime to help meet a difficult position.

On the other hand, if a federation of Hill people of joint origin could be formed, the educational system could be adapted to take count of the natural genius of these people, which then might be developed for genuine export. They might evince a special genius for hand crafts, surgery, manipulative surgery, or other arts. But, the principle of subordinating education to the need of producing a few individuals to be employed chiefly in spheres with no cultural affinity with their native land, is not easy to justify.

For any contribution to Lushai's salvation to be valid, it must be aimed at a distant future, and offered in that spirit and in the faith in the sureness of good results of sincere work in times to come. No worker among people, who are erroneously termed primitive, perhaps for want of a better comparative term, should have any other approach in his or her mind. Till this sobering and severe decision can faithfully be made, it is wise for aspirants who wish to live among these people, to postpone seeking the opportunities afforded by service in these fields. It must nearly always be left to others to reap where seeds have been sown.

PART 2

In the previous chapter we found that Lushai was being faced by many difficult problems. We saw the picture of many Lushai Chiefs without special training being faced with the necessity of adapting themselves from a one-village life, secured by force of arms, to life within a whole land of Lushai villages, secured by the Pax Britannica. We saw these Chiefs faced with peculiar conditions of an unindigenous nature, greatly brought about by the influence of some twenty European missionaries spreading their ideas on religion among an emotional people. We saw the rising of an oligarchy, or intelligentsia, founded on an educational system based on conditions and factors with which the Lushai people and Lushai land had practically nothing in common. We saw that there was, unavoidably, no strong counter-machinery for encouraging the Lushai Chiefs to stand the shock of such impacts. We were also compelled to admit that the administration, as a whole, had not been sustained from Home by any widely proclaimed policy, being more guided through necessity by day-to-day considerations overweighted, at times, by the powerful bureaucratic machine of India. In the face of such an unpromising picture, bearing in mind the financial ambiguity discussed earlier in this present chapter, all that one could attempt was to lay the seeds of growth, hoping that the people would tend them and reap a truly ravishing harvest.

The chief immediate necessity was a machinery for

encouraging unity among the many Chiefs, so that an authoritative opinion on Lushai matters could at any time be easily available, without resort to vested interests, the irresponsible chatterbox, or the individual opinion of a Superintendent, as he happened to see the problem, after a short or long experience of service in the Lushai Hills. Concurrently with such a machinery, which envisages a Chief's Durbar, must run some training of the people towards a more united nationhood, and the nucleus of a framework, for consultative purposes, within each village in the Hills. To raise the economic status of the people, and to counter cruel poverty, the whole could be supported by a Cottage Industries Organisation, capable of affording to the clever, industrious worker, material benefit, and to the grower a better price for raw materials.

In the succeeding pages the means adopted for striving towards these objectives are described, and they include organisations for the Lushai Hills District Durbar, the Welfare Committee System, the Ten Point Code, and the Lushai Hills Cottage Industries. They constitute positive contributions towards seeing that the "suitable idea" gets in first. Their chief merit, at worst, may lie only in their contrast to the inactivity and drift, which must constitute an alternative programme.

PART 3

In ancient days virile men seized power and held it in their time by wisdom and courage, until they became decadent, or were overpowered. These conditions have ended. Chieftainships are now hereditary, subject to good behaviour, and physical and mental normality. This changeover imposes an entirely fresh responsibility upon Government to ensure that the Chiefs are trained to administer their subjects in accordance with the standards demanded by British rule, in view of the fact that it is this Government which is securing the status of Chieftainship. His Excellency Sir Robert Reid, Governor of Assam, paved the way for an improvement in the calibre of the modern Chief, by causing the recognition of the eldest son as heir to the Chieftainship, a move which had every legal

justification, while not clashing with the laws of property, in which he had no cause or desire to interfere arbitrarily. His decision in this respect was actuated by the need for declaring a line of procedure appropriate to new conditions of settled rule, conditions which had no indigenous precedent. It now being known that the eldest son shall succeed, educational assistance, where possible, can be applied to the appropriate son.

Where there were about sixty Chiefs, when the Government took over the Lushai Hills, there are now more than four hundred, a sad reflection on the failure of local district officers to abide by the warning of that wise administrator and first Superintendent, Colonel John Shakespear, C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O., who strongly advised against the splitting up of the Lushai Hills among a number of smaller Chiefs, with ever diminishing influence. But in the absence of clear and definite rules, policies, and checks by the Government, local Officers' recommendations, based on hardly earned experience, have no statutory binding on their successors.

With such a large number of Chiefs with whom to deal, the Superintendent must nowadays have some machinery for co-ordination and consultation. We must recall that the practice is to administer the Lushai Hills, through the Lushai Chiefs, a form of rule which the people by long tradition understand and accept. The more local Officers assume the functions of these Chiefs, the more they extend their personal jurisdiction over the individual members of Chiefs' communities. The logical conclusion of any chronic development in this direction could be a subversive revolt by the people against their traditional Chiefs. Such a development would have detrimental and far-reaching effects on the whole body politic, because it will be very many years before the Lushai villager will ever be able to reorganise for himself a fresh social system to his liking and to his advantage. It is essential that the administration should discountenance any moves, which may have a subversive influence on rule by the Lushai Chiefs, and one of its main duties will remain to avoid interference in village administration, as far as is compatible with the avoidance

of unwarranted hardship, exploitation, or the commission of acts wholly repugnant to the general standards of British tolerance.

The problem then presents itself in the form of a need for creating some machinery by which the principle of rule by the Lushai Chiefs in their individual villages may still be retained in relation to the government of the Lushai people throughout the whole of the Lushai Hills. Unless some such machinery can be devised, more and more dependence must be placed upon the personality of the local District Officer, the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, and his ability to serve the best interests of a developing people. This latter alternative, apart from its natural limitations, is in itself a partial denial of the principle of self-development and is, therefore, one of defeatism rather than of creation. The best means for achieving the machinery desired would appear to be through a District Chiefs' Durbar, in the positive absence of any one Chief, who could, by common consent, be raised to the status of a supreme ruler with a council.

The method of selection of members to serve on such a Durbar is important. The whole district is divided up administratively into circles, in which there are ten or twenty Chiefs. The Chiefs of each circle would record votes for their first, second, and third choices, under a secret ballot system. The returning officer would be the District or Sub-Divisional Officer. The Chief securing the highest aggregate would be appointed as Circle Spokesman for his fellow Circle Chiefs, and he would hold this position for a period of three years. Consideration may have to be given to special representation, where an important clan finds itself seriously under-represented.

On appointment to the Durbar, each Chief would have to sign a document, which he should hand to the President, who would be the District Officer, or Superintendent, as he is termed, in the case of the Lushai Hills charge.

The document might read as follows :—

1. That in accepting membership of the Lushai Hills Durbar I stake my allegiance to His Majesty wholeheartedly in my desire to serve His Majesty loyally all

the days of my life, and that membership of the Durbar I take as an opportunity for the service and the advancement of all things Lushai, so that my influence may be directed towards the material and communal uplift of each and all among the Lushai peoples inhabiting our land and enjoying our common heritage.

(This may seem provocatively didactic, but we must keep in mind that we are dealing with Chiefs, who are by tradition and inclination, deficient in any capacity for thinking of the future, or for serving their community that they themselves may continue to rule. Now that the British Government is behind their status as Chiefs we must commence actively to educate them into the responsibilities of leadership. If there is any capacity for rule or leadership in Lushai, it undoubtedly lies in the Chiefly classes.)

2. In accepting the Office of member of the Lushai Hills Durbar, I accept responsibility for constantly studying the condition and lives of all the people committed to my charge, as well as problems which are being encountered by my Fellow Chiefs, as far as opportunity allows.

(This is aimed at encouraging a sense among the Chiefs that they must serve in order to continue to rule and that they must come closer and closer together, coalescing in a sense of mutual status and responsibilities.)

3. In accepting Membership of the Durbar, I automatically acknowledge that my main and first task should be to aim at the unity and the well-being of the Lushai people, and that my personal and material ambitions should receive no particular advantage by my association with the Durbar.

(This is intended to foster a sense of nationalism, and that service should be given without calculation of gain. The Chiefs are too ready to grasp without giving service, a characteristic which is also very prominent among many of the salaried classes.)

4. I also recognise that only by studying the art of administration and disciplining myself to place the needs

of the people before any personal comfort can I hope to retain the confidence of my village people and that this aim should also be made paramount by all and every Chief privileged to rule.

(This is to emphasize that administration under the protective and settled conditions of British rule demands study and care. Without this study and care, how can the Chiefs continue to stand up to the ever-increasing number of young Lushais with academic experiences ?)

5. I undertake to study and to master the principles of administration, laid down in the Lushai Hills District cover as amended from time to time, recognising that these emanate from age-long practice and custom, or from the need for Lushai Land to meet changing conditions from time to time.

(The Lushai Hills District cover is referred to later in this chapter. This direction is an encouragement to the Chiefs to keep faith with tradition, while retaining an open mind in the face of changes for the benefit of the community.)

6. I recognise that before changes of Lushai custom be sanctioned, the changes must result from the needs of the ordinary people for the changes, and from their prior practice among the majority of the Lushai people.

(This is a cautionary strengthening of the Chiefs' position, and that of the masses, against assault on custom under conditions of artificial superimposition, sponsored by reformers, anxious to create effect in their own time without adequate thought for the people affected.)

7. I recognise that the Government has ruled that all Lushai Chiefs holding boundary papers in their names are equal in status.

(This is a counter to any resurrection of a universal tendency among all individual Chiefs to assert claims of clan precedence. When we are aiming at building up a machinery dependent for its success on unity among the Chiefs, tendencies to put forth provocative claims, dating back to conditions in the old days, cannot be encouraged.)

These articles have been conceived with the intention of ensuring the development of "suitable ideas" in Chiefs' rule. They would apply to Chiefs with no traditional sense beyond life under circumscribed village conditions of old. Many are alive to the traditional flux of old. Few, if any, have ever planned for a future. None has been subject to any specialised training in their administrative duties. The Durbar, for many years, would meet only in an advisory capacity, members being encouraged to earn, by their energy and wisdom, the right in due course to exercise defined executive powers, both judicial and administrative.

The Durbar would ordinarily meet about twice a year at a place as central as possible for the convenience of all, it being recalled that these members would come from all Circles within the 8,000 square miles of Lushai Land. The Durbar could sit for seven to ten days in a consultative and advisory capacity to the President, who would be the Superintendent. In between the disposal of business the Superintendent could give administrative lectures on evidence and legal procedure, forest and soil conservation, agriculture, co-operative movements, political trends, public health, and many essential matters, concerning which the Chiefs have never received any adequate instruction.

The chief functions of the Durbar would be as follows :—

1. To consider and discuss all administrative measures which involve any changes in the Lushai Hills District Cover, which is the record of approved rules and customs.

(At present, orders can be passed occasionally in the will of the Superintendent, but without close consultation with Chiefs a "slave mentality", associated with a vanquished and subject people, is bound to perpetuate, and Chiefs will have no encouragement to develop a sense of personal responsibility for the welfare of their land. It is the Superintendent who is transitory—the Chiefs who are permanent.)

2. To bring for discussion any matters which are causing the people difficulty or misunderstanding, whether in relation to Government's orders, social conditions, or contacts from any source, which is not indigenous.

(This places on the Chiefs their personal responsibility for keeping themselves informed of what is going on, and for reporting trends which may be causing alarm or despondency among the Lushai people.)

3. To bring for discussion any matters which may be calculated to promote the well-being of the people of Lushai Land, such as taxation, provision of amenities, education, communications, medical service, and other matters.

(This should encourage the Chiefs to think for themselves, and will serve as a means by which they can be introduced to the relationship between their own and others' money and effort.)

4. To hear any who wish to state a case of grievance against the orders of the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, after such party has prepaid a Durbar Charge of about ten shillings in cash or in kind, by usual custom.

In the event of the Durbar feeling that the applicant has a case, the matter should be reported to His Excellency for orders.

Unless a Lushai has so appeared before the Durbar, no reference against the Superintendent's orders to His Excellency shall be valid.

(The Durbar could never constitute a means of interference in the Superintendent's day-to-day Executive duties, under the statutory rules, but the importance of the provision lies in the fact that it supports the principle of rule of the people by the Chiefs, and it affords a very necessary safety valve to any Lushai, who is so imbued with a sense of grievance at his treatment by the Superintendent, that he will risk publicity at the hands of his own people. The alternative to such a machinery is a direct appeal against the Superintendent's orders to His Excellency, which in itself is directly counter to rule by the Chiefs, and will cumulatively encourage individual Lushais to take their affairs outside their social system to Government Officers, often even to the annoyance of their own people, whose hearts a local Officer probably knows very well.)

5. Responsibility for ensuring that no administrative

changes take place, which are not laid before the Durbar, shall lie personally upon the Superintendent, Lushai Hills.

(This is to serve as a check to any Superintendent, in irascible or perverse mood, passing orders contrary to those which have become established in the Lushai Hills District Cover, without seeking their acceptance through the proper channels.

If this rule had been practised earlier there would not now be over 400 as against an original 60 Chiefs in Lushai !)

6. Every matter discussed shall be recorded, and copies submitted for the information of His Excellency.

In cases where the Superintendent passes opinions contrary to those expressed by the Durbar, these will be submitted to His Excellency for final orders.

(This practice will ensure that nothing can go on without the knowledge of His Excellency. It will provide a machinery for a genuine difference of opinion between the Superintendent and his Chiefs, and will minimise the tendency to intrigue and discontent.)

It is by an approach through the Durbar that the paramount power should more easily be able to secure the adoption of its desires, while avoiding the appearance of being a principal in domestic affairs. While the persuasion of some 500 Chiefs towards a certain mode of progress might well prove an impossible task, where distances are so great and personal contacts, necessarily, so rare, it should prove practicable through some 28 to 30 Chiefs, already selected by their colleagues for their wisdom and influence, given reasonable forbearance, patience, and sincerity on the side of the administration.

Such problems as the control of jhuming, forest reservations, erosion, and other kindred matters, present serious difficulties, when their solution must depend upon a new mind within a people who have never suffered restrictions not already exercised by Nature herself. There will always be more hope of their satisfactory solution through the energy of the Chiefs than by direct action by Government Officers among the people within the jurisdiction of the Durbar, without any support or understanding of these same people

and their leaders. This former approach may be more slow in the beginning, but if preceded by suitable education and instruction, especially among the young, the clash of impact will surely be greatly softened. Moreover, by such method there is every reason to trust that correction will be applied by the more responsible elements among the population, in contrast to the situation that must arise, but which is to be avoided, if possible, by which Government by direct intervention finds itself, through its officers, as a principal in a contentious relationship with the whole mass of the people. Hurried remedies, applied by direct and unpopular action, aimed at compensating, for perhaps in some cases many years of inaction, are to be avoided, if the possibilities of misunderstanding and deep-laid resentment are also to be reduced.

The existence of the Durbar would have a profound effect on the people. The common agitator, pressing to represent Lushai, would at once be called to state his case before the Durbar. Otherwise he could with impunity enlist public support, and work up emotion on a wide basis, in a campaign between himself and the Government, the Government being a principal in a case concerning a people, who should be governed by the Lushai Chiefs, the latter probably strongly disapproving of the agitation, but, except by means of the Durbar, having no recognised channel for the expression of their views. This situation is peculiar to such areas as Lushai, and does not arise in the same form in emancipated districts in the Plains of India.

By the constitution of such a Durbar, while the Administration would have a really knowledgeable body to consult in matters of importance, the Chiefs would have a proper machinery for ensuring that no changes through passing emotion could be brought about by the authorities, or unauthorised Lushai people, without such proposals being fully ventilated, and receiving either their sanction or condemnation. Unless such a body exists, the untimely disintegration will be inevitable, and the last state will surely be worse than the first. If a Durbar, equipped with its own funds, and under the supervision of a Political Officer, is permitted to make grants on a reciprocal basis on nation

building projects, a sense of financial responsibility is likely to develop, and irresponsible squandering checked. But the path of few Durbars is likely to be either smooth or free from disappointment. Two incidents are recalled as illustrations.

In order either to impress the authorities, or to force their hand, an agitator secured the support of many Chiefs for the collection of funds with which to start a high school, and to appoint a certain person as head master. The career of the man chosen for the head master, whose appointment was sponsored by these Chiefs, was lurid, to say the least of it. He failed to get any degree at the Calcutta University in spite of passing the Intermediate after two years' study, was the central figure in a large cotton deal scandal, involving a very large loss to many poor and trusting cultivators, was appointed to Government service in the hope that he might yet turn into a useful citizen, was during this service strongly suspected by the police with complicity in a serious sabotage case against some school buildings at night, and was ultimately dismissed from Government service due to inexcusable negligence !

On another occasion a number of Chiefs responded similarly to the plagiary of another agitator, when villages were being called on to decide if they were willing to make a small contribution in rice to their village schoolmasters, who were being paid in cash by the missions a sum at least fifteen times the selling value of the rice contribution suggested. The real reason for the need for the contribution lay in the necessity for securing a general uniformity of practice throughout all the schools, and to maintain the essential principle of mutual contribution in return for benefits conferred. Some Chiefs expressed their unwillingness to meet this infinitesimal liability, unless Government could see their way to providing a high school, because it was of no value giving children any education in the villages unless they could go on to a high school. The closing of any of the 200 village schools would have resulted in a cash saving to the authorities, and in an obvious loss to the village, both of its school, as well as its salaried worker, himself always an asset. The attitude to the high school

can be compared to a person saying that he could not pay one shilling as a contribution to the twenty shillings being spent by the authorities on his family's welfare, unless the authorities agreed to bring a further advantage to them by affording an increase of their gift from twenty shillings to twenty pounds !!

The constitution of a Durbar, composed of elected Chiefs, one from each of the administrative circles, would not only help to curb such irresponsibilities, but would put the agitator out of business, because any parties involved would be too ashamed to bring such matters before their own kith and kin. A cardinal principle, at which all administrators of backward areas should aim, is to secure for themselves a position of arbitration in all matters involving the aspirations of individuals or clans. It is wise for Government to stand as a principal in certain ultimate decisions concerning matters like capital sentences, taxation, changes in custom, but even in all these things the Administration should seek to secure some expression of responsible clan opinion. Failure to do this will tend to perpetuate the slave mentality, and will persistently operate against one of the main aims of the administration, which is so to succour the people and their social framework that they may develop and flourish into that orderliness of shape, which will enable them to take their place as equals among their neighbours.

Without some feeder organisation of a consultative nature the Durbar by itself would have an inadequate basis for enabling members to secure informed opinion among the villagers. But a system of village welfare committees, primarily designed for the dissemination of public health information, might well constitute the start of a consultative machinery in the villages.

PART 4

WELFARE COMMITTEE SYSTEM

Not more than three per cent. of the population are in reasonably permanent contact with the amenities of headquarters and the supreme district direction. In order to extend to the remaining ninety-seven per cent. some of

these amenities, a system of village welfare committees has been inaugurated. This system in no way impinges on the traditional spheres of ruling Chiefs. It is a system devised to encourage the Lushai people towards meeting the new conditions of more settled life, brought about by the Pax Britannica. These new conditions have little to no parallel in traditional Lushai. The system aims chiefly at spreading simple and essential information of an authoritative nature, concerning all matters of public health and living conditions, for the benefit of all the villages. The technical authority is the local head of the medical services, known as the Civil Surgeon. It is clearly essential in all technical matters, concerning public health and medical needs, that there should be only one final authority. There is no place for enthusiastic amateurs, all barking out, inconsequently, their theories on this and that aspect of public health and kindred matters.

Village welfare committees operate under the guidance of a Red Cross District Committee situated at Aijal, and this District Committee is composed of all competent and representative elements, European and Lushai, comprising the forces at work in the Lushai Hills. Unanimous decisions only are acted upon by the Committee. This ensures nothing is sent out to the villages which is not amenable to Lushai conditions, and which has not got the technical approval of the district medical authority. Religious, educational, and other interests being on this Committee, there is little chance of the Committee's decisions creating any misunderstanding elsewhere.

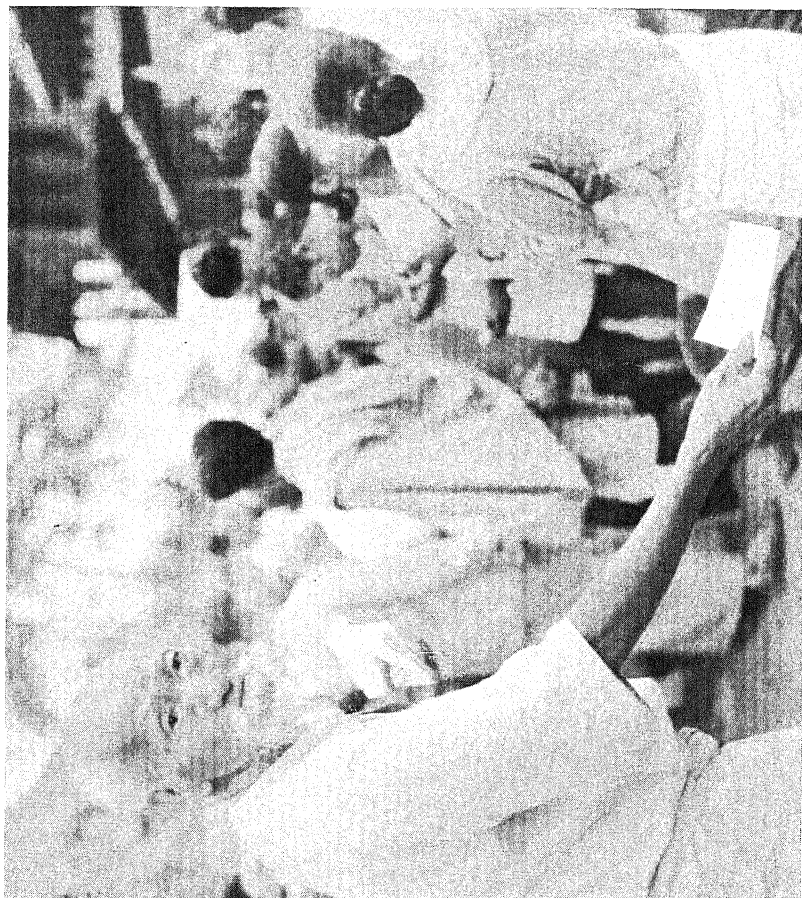
While progress may be slow, and the subject-matter of the invitations issued to the villages necessarily limited, the advantage of the organisation is that every directional head in the District is wedded to the unstinted support of the measures finally adopted. This has helped to reduce considerably erstwhile confusion caused by one or more of the score of Europeans uttering varying kinds of advice at recurrent intervals. The paralysis which such a situation could easily cause among an uninformed and impressionable people is not difficult to imagine. Such paralysis, once established, takes years and years of patient endeavour

before the body politic is once again in a frame of mind to accept collaboration in the common struggle. In some cases such varying views, expressed with the best of intentions, have brought the administration and the various non-official directions into undisguised contempt.

As the Headquarters Committee aims at being wholly representative, so are the village welfare committees expected to be fully representative. One of the conditions prior to the creation of a village welfare committee is that, if one is to be formed, it must comply with the district rules. These rules provide that any committee so formed must include the Chief, as President, who will be assisted by heads of the village church and school, pensioners, and two sensible ordinary village women and two sensible ordinary village men. This constitution promotes unity, and is appropriate to the new conditions of more settled rule. It operates against churchmen or teachers wishing to make bids for power and independence, and encourages them to support openly their village Chief, which again militates in a healthy manner against party village factions. The membership of two ordinary men and women should serve as an encouragement to the Chief and to the people to accord a better status to their women, and to take a more intelligent interest in all matters affecting the common enemy, namely, disease. This organisation offers to members of the oligarchy, or privileged classes, a means of evincing their talent and of using their energy along very useful and nation-building lines.

The constitution of these committees also helps to counter the selfish individualism, which, curiously, Christianity, if not very very carefully handled, seems so capable of encouraging. It must serve to emphasize the necessity for service for the good of the community.

The actual formation of the committee rests solely with the village Chief. If he does not wish to form a committee, there is no official pressure. He is left to face up to his neighbours and his villagers, and in not forming such a committee he may sometimes be perfectly correct. But once he decides to form one, he must proceed by rule. The procedure is simple.



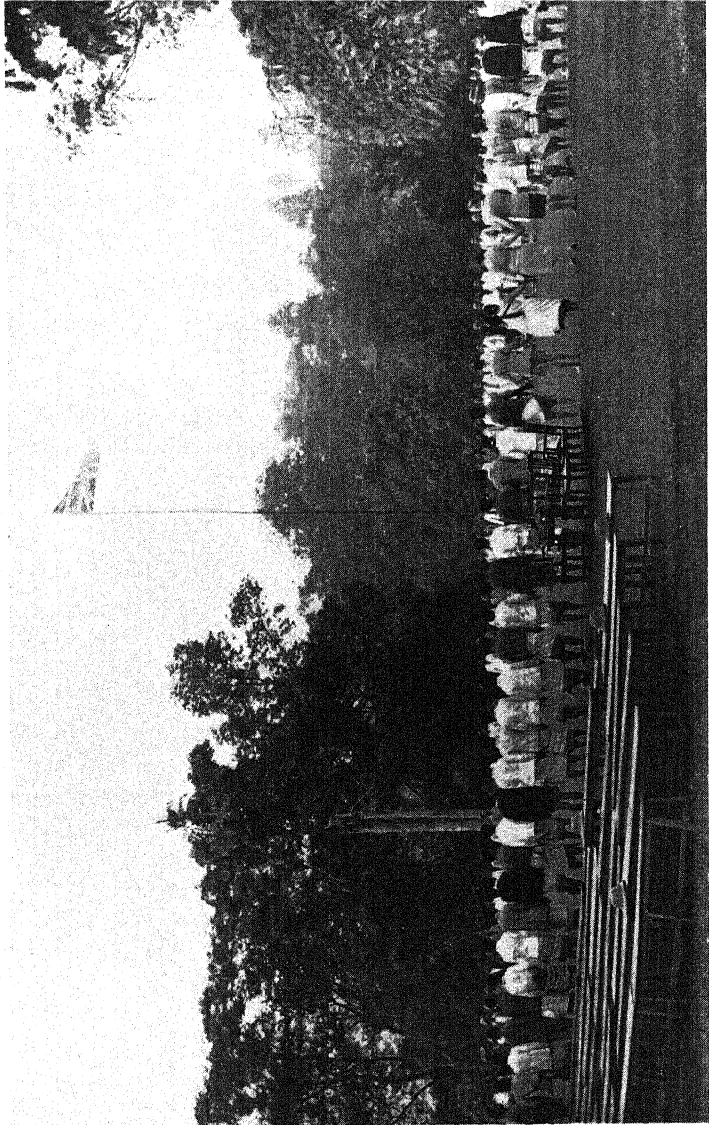
ROKUNGA PA

(FATHER OF ROKUNGA)

who made his war contribution by selling the *Daily News Bulletin* without remuneration, killing a fowl to celebrate each occasion of good news, a pig a real victory ! He is here seen about to sell his thousandth Bulletin, a feat which earned for him a presentation gun,

The following telegram was received by H.E. the governor of Assam from the Superintendent Lushai Hills:—

"It is not without emotion and admiration am able to inform Your Excellency three hundred Chiefs and Elders of North Lushai Hills after thirty years serious consideration of all aspects and without persuasion following an unwavering direct address of responsibility involved have decided to offer Total resistance to any invader stop all chiefs, civil assistants, Mrs. McCall, Chief Lushai Ministerial Officer, and self, joined hands receiving Union Jack token of unity and allegiance to His Majesty. 6/30 P.M. April 1942."



LUSHAI CHIEFS LINK HANDS AROUND THE UNION JACK
with the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, and his wife in their compound on April 3rd, 1942.

On receipt of some message or suggestion from the Headquarter Committee the Chief, at his convenience, will call his committee members to his house for local consultation, and will seek unanimity among them for acceptance of the advice proffered. The advice may take the following form :—

“ If you must spit, don’t spit in your house, but in the sunlight where germs may die more quickly ” or—
“ When your wife is pregnant, remember she has two to feed. Help her and find out how to give her better food by consulting your village diet pamphlet ” or—
“ Don’t drink tea when your meal is a meat meal.”

The Chief will ask all his members if they themselves agree or do not agree to follow the advice under consideration. If they are not unanimous, the advice is dropped, to await more favourable times. It is not desirable to perpetuate one Lushai trait, which is to tell others to do what the speaker himself is not carrying out ! If the Committee is really unanimous the stage is set for the next step.

The villagers are all called together once a month, and the new goodwill message of advice is read out, and a short discussion may ensue. It will not be easy or proper to expect a considered reply from the villagers immediately. So the villagers are asked to talk over the matter, and to be prepared to give their decision at the meeting, which will be held in the next month. When the next month comes around the President, with his colleagues, will ask for a show of hands in favour of the former proposal or against it. If the villagers are mostly against it, the matter is dropped. If they favour the proposal, it is agreed to adopt the advice as a village custom, and to follow it conscientiously. No penalty for failure to follow this new obligation is leviable, but public opinion is invited to take a hand, so that all may try and follow the advice.

All this may seem making much of trifles, but the principles involved are far-reaching. We are dealing with a people imbued with the slave mentality, of expecting life to be interrupted by peremptory orders from Government

or the Chiefs. This machinery invites the people to make choices on their own initiative, and to make an effort for their own good, no officials apparently caring anything about it, even if the people do choose to go on their own unenlightened path. The machinery obviously does not depend upon any one Superintendent's dynamic qualities. The machinery involves all the people of Lushai being reminded once a month of matters concerning their own well being. This is in itself a considerable advance on what is more usual, namely, discussions with selected personalities, on those rare occasions when contacts are possible. The machinery also helps to break down secret desires to usurp the Chief's position of responsibility and leadership. It automatically raises the Chief's self-confidence, and it brings him into consultative acquaintance with his people, thus initiating the way for future developments, when some more advanced form of electoral or consultative machinery may become desirable. There is every hope that this will also lead to an alleviation of the condition of Lushai womanhood, and to a resuscitation of a healthy and natural community life.

The system would receive a great fillip if the desirable policy was ever introduced of concentrating more on a cadre of Lushai doctors, trained in the elementals of medicines, maternity welfare, and hygiene, operating from out-district centres, and aiming at prophylactic treatments, in preference to incurring large running costs in dispensary institutions. Areas are so vast, and accommodation, in any case, so limited, that dispensaries can only usually be availed of by the very few. It is not possible to provide such institutions with that quality of doctor, capable of performing surgery in its truest sense. There should be one or two institutions fully equipped, at which surgical work can be competently undertaken and efficiently supported by safe nursing. The feeding of these institutions would lie chiefly in the hands of the out-district prophylactic cadre. This prophylactic cadre could do much to bring ever-increasing reality to the monthly goodwill messages. It would be possible to maintain six Lushai prophylactic doctors at the cost now incurred on one out-district dispensary

with double the allowance of medicine being supplied for local needs.

The reader may also note that this whole organisation costs no more to run than the printing and paper costs of the monthly very short "goodwill message" slips, and any pamphlets the Committee may wish to have issued. Recent pamphlets have included precise directions as to how to identify and treat epidemic diseases and how to feed or sustain the sick until a doctor can reach a village, which would probably be ten days to a month after the disease had broken out. Another pamphlet dealt with local Lushai foods, and information inviting a choice of better-balanced meals, the pamphlet being written wholly on a Lushai basis. The free issues of such carefully and authoritatively prepared pamphlets, applying wholly to Lushai conditions, constitute measures which have the greatest educational value.

In this connection, a special tribute is due to the medical officers, mission executives, and committee members, who give of their time and knowledge for the good of the Lushai people, all effort being pooled and anonymously disseminated under the Committee's caption. "By direction of the Lushai Hills District Red Cross Committee." The sincerity of motive, which lies behind this line of procedure is some indication of the spirit in which all are ever increasingly endeavouring to set about their work.

Has this not in a measure fulfilled the hopes of Dr. Clement C. Chesterman, O.B.E., M.D., M.R.C.P., D.T.M.V.H., that "the new spirit of co-operation between missions and Governments in Africa, based on mutual appreciation of ideals and difficulties, would be further extended into the realm of rural hygiene, and that many of his own fraternity would be stimulated to make further efforts in this direction"?

This machinery contains the greatest potential seeds for consolidating mutual trust and understanding between all directional forces at work in the Hills. In the conception of the Durbar we see the development and consolidation of rule of the people by Chiefs, and in the welfare machinery we see a feeder potential towards an increase in the share of the people in their own development and healthy

self-expression. Now, let us look further and seek a means whereby the individual Lushai may be wooed gently towards a clearer conception of good citizenship and the initiation of a sense of nationalism and new interdependability, far beyond the narrow confines of his own little village. This means is being sought through the "ten point code".

PART 5

THE TEN POINT CODE

We have seen the contribution, which a central organisation, like a Lushai Hills Durbar could make in meeting the needs of encouraging a unity of purpose among the various leaders, when its aims include stimulating abroad a sense of nationhood and well-being. Where small entities of power happen to exist, perpetuity can only be achieved where there is paramountcy. Within this paramountcy, if smaller units can be drawn together to form a political entity, like a Durbar, the course is set for a wider development of indigenous culture and material resources. The people will have some opportunity of shaping their own destiny. The degree of success will be a measure of the people's genius.

To support the Durbar some means are necessary by which an invitation to the people may issue, on a wide and sustained basis, aimed at bringing the people more closely together in bonds of common interest and understanding. This will sow the seeds of a temperate nationhood. We must remember that without the bond of sober nationhood a people can not preserve their own culture or their ways of living. National feeling can only be harmful when it seeks for expansion at the cost of others.

The machinery, which has been adopted to seek to bring a people, threatened by disintegration at the hands of stronger cultures, ever closer together in a single community of interests, is the Ten Point Code. This code has been put into Lushai. There are classes of children who can recite this code from beginning to the end without a fault, this having been achieved without any pressure of any kind from the Government. This code has been put into Lushai

verse by the Lushai Poet Chief, PU SAIHNUNA FANAI, of LENG village, in the East of the Lushai Hills, and in this form music composers have set it to music for choirs to sing. Welfare Committees are invited to read out to the people two points of this code each month at the village welfare meetings. The code was introduced after full consultation with the missions as to whether they saw any reason to disagree with the terms of the various points. They were consulted, in the knowledge that unless the missions, through their more sophisticated teachers, pastors, and others, supported the idea of the code, it would be unlikely that the Chiefs themselves would be able to grasp its use in the face of cold shouldering by the large number of mission employees.

The Ten Point Code was also conceived to act as a counter to certain Lushai tendencies, diagnosed by Colonel Shakespear, C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O., in 1905, which may be quoted below :—

“The chief vices of the Lushais are :—

1. A want of manly independence ; even rich Chiefs are ready to beg. The people are quite ready to accept favours, but will take no trouble to improve themselves. If a dispensary is put in their village they will gladly attend, but they will not walk a few miles to do so ; if a man is sick, and his friends are told to carry him a day or two's journey to hospital, where his cure is certain, they will not do so unless forced to.

I, therefore, should advise that the Lushais should be gradually educated out of this objectionable peculiarity by not being given too many favours gratis.

2. A tendency to intrigue. At present they are novices at the art, but what they are likely to become, if they are not stopped, we can see by studying their near relatives. Requests should seldom be granted off-hand. The most innocent may conceal a deeper plan.
3. The habit of doing something to rush you or leaving a request till there is no time to consider the matter. All orders should be given in writing.
4. A great love of litigation ; cases that have been

disposed of or rejected will be brought up again and again, whenever a new *sahib* comes ; therefore, it is most important to keep a brief record of all cases.

5. Laziness is a male vice, and on account of its prevalence, I am in doubt as to the wisdom of abolishing the impressment of labour."

A perusal of the Ten Point Code will show that in an invitational sense, an attempt has been made to encourage among the people a desire to remedy some of their defects by their own effort. Cures by order and edict have little lasting effect, and are apt to result in a form of passive resistance, "on principle". Salutory and dictatorial action is better reserved for real emergencies. What is more needed is the gradual substitution of the "slave mentality", diagnosed by Colonel Shakespear, by the more manly independence he so much desired.

Point No. 1

"We desire to maintain a wholesome respect for all that is best in our indigenous culture, which bears the stamp of the hardly learned experience of our brave forefathers, over time immemorial."

(The object here is to give the people good heart and encouragement in the face of devastating contacts by alien cultures. There is a spirit abroad, among the reformers, chiefly the Lushai Church and stipendiary evangelists, to root out anything and all things which may belong to the past, not so much on merit, but rather because they do belong to the past, and there is a feverish search always for something new, a toy, an innovation. This might not be such an alarming trend, if eradication was accompanied by dynamic and creative forces. It is the momentum of this movement to eradicate that has fostered an inevitable sense of inferiority complex, a lack of confidence in things Lushai. For instance, one Lushai gave as reasons for being specially exempted from traditional public service, outside any scope of the administration, that he owned an orange garden, held a trade pass, and was living separately in his own garden. Surely such a man has more interest than most in the upkeep of village roads and the support of law and order, as personified by the Chief?

The same feeling is common in the case of men who have retired from service in the Government or Forces ; the desire to evade social obligations imposed, through the common need, by age-long custom. While Government is glad to remit its own obligations, as far as possible, in recognition of an individual's service to the State it is a long step further to vest in success the privilege of freedom from traditional and social obligations, unless this is conferred spontaneously by common consent of the society.

This direction is a counter-irritant, a stimulus towards a revival in confidence, pride, and a sense of general well being.)

Point No. 2

"We desire to inspire in our people an ambition to maintain a true sense of proportion as to what wants and desires are reasonable in relation to our own natural resources and industry."

(This is intended to encourage a sobriety of mind in the face of so much which must seem unattainable to most. It is also a counter to a disposition to 'beg', unaccompanied by any urge to suffer or make effort to obtain the object of the desire. It is hoped that this direction will induce a will to achieve their wants by looking towards their own resources, their own agriculture, and by relying on their own energy to develop them.

The more educated Lushais have been known to pitch their request to the level of the moon, with no sense of the irresponsibility of their requests. It is thus advisable to encourage a sense of proportion, so that they may weigh their requests against the resources available for their attainment.)

Point No. 3

"We desire to maintain strict loyalty to our Chief in all things lawful, and in all his efforts on behalf of the welfare of his people, in return for which the Chief will serve the interests of his people so that he may continue to rule."

(Subversive and unpatriotic quarters, usually among the articulate elements, not infrequently decry or criticise genuine efforts by a Chief to lead his people. Inexperienced in ruling under static conditions and peace, Chiefs naturally

have much to learn. By such subversive and mischievous comments a Chief may easily lose confidence. It must be recalled that many commoners have had a kind of academic stuffing, which has not as yet been widely shared by the Chiefs.

The direction is also in turn designed to bring home to the Chiefs that if they wish to preserve their own hereditary rights, with the support of the British Government, they must learn the vital need of ruling by service. In olden days the Chief ruled the people he could protect. Under new conditions the Chiefs must acquire a new technique, capable of tackling settled conditions, as well as the growth of the irresponsible and anti-social mischief maker.)

Point No. 4

"We desire to inculcate into one and all that we should display the same sense of loyalty to our whole village community as we desire to practise towards our own families."

(Lushai is fast tending towards losing her sense, or need perhaps, of traditional community loyalties, for a variety of reasons. A prominent influence is the teaching by Christianity of individual salvation after death. This has encouraged a sense of the importance of the individual, which has reacted upon the indigenous valuation of the importance of community needs.

This direction, while not attempting to minimise the unassailable sanctity of the individual soul, does aim at reviving a sense of responsibility in the hearts of the people towards the community of which each is a member. Disintegration is at stake, and, in the environment which is Lushai, an essential need of life is a strong family and communal bond. In a society, where there are no utility services, undertakers, and the like, the life of the society depends upon its capacity for self-help and a general relationship of inter-dependency. In short, "Love thy neighbour as thyself".)

Point No. 5

"We desire to do all in our power to foster the indigenous spirit of Tlawmgaihna in our midst".

(The term Tlawmgaihna implies public spirit. In

traditional Lushai, those who displayed this spirit in the hunt, in battle, in emergencies, or at any time, were feted and praised by the public. To be graded as a hero young men would vie with each other to be in the forefront to answer calls for public needs.

In this chrysalis stage of Lushai there is a tendency for this spirit to weaken, chiefly because the ways of rewarding such braves have greatly diminished under Christian influence. There are no longer the laughing parties with good drink flowing freely, while young maidens vied to shower favours on these Adonises. Fresh methods with the same appeal have not yet been devised to fill the gap.

Deeds of outstanding merit may be recognised by speeches from the pulpit, or perhaps by modern tea hospitality, but deeds of brave hunting and endurance fail to appeal to the new social judges, in their quest for meekness and gentility.

The spirit of Tlawmngaihna lies tranquil in the hearts of all good Lushais. This invitation is intended to encourage its manifestation. The missionaries try to encourage the revival of this admirable spirit.)

Point No. 6

"We desire to integrate into our daily village lives, within the indigenous framework of our social system, what modern science and knowledge have discovered, by strengthening and safeguarding our characters and

Health

Home

Crops

Industry

Possessions

(The implication of this direction is that it is incompatible with the spread of education to expect conditions to remain immune from changes. By this direction, it is hoped to encourage the people towards a sober conservatism, while accepting appropriate and profitable innovations into the existing Lushai social framework. It is hoped to accustom the people to the sense that changes may take place without any loss of confidence. It is an encouragement to seek sober changes, which Government and social workers advise,

with special emphasis on public health, cultivation of market gardens, resort to industry, and the need for possessions as a safeguard against crop failures.)

Point No. 7

"We desire to seek all useful channels for the greater use of our leisure time so that by our industry we may bring advantages to our families and to our villages as a whole—making increasingly sincere efforts so to arrange our lives that we may relieve our womenfolk of some of the harder work, that we may spare them in the hope and belief that they will, in their turn, take increased trouble to rear finer children, and make better food, clothes, and happier and more united homes."

(It is intended by this to encourage the people to develop the opportunities afforded now by a change from the old conditions of uncertainty to the new conditions of peace and security.

Sentry work, hunting, and fighting, no longer make serious calls on men. But increased families and wider cultivation make increased calls on the Lushai women. It follows that Lushai men should be more enterprising than they are in coming forward to take over more of the labours which fall to men in times of peace; these labours include the cutting and carrying in of firewood, the weeding of the cultivation, and even the drawing of the water, all of which work is physically exhausting. It is hoped to encourage the men to relieve their women of such heavy labour, in order that their women may perform the better that work which is unavoidably women's work, like the rearing of babies and the making of the families' clothes and food.

In all these respects the hearts of the men are often evil. The men grudge their women a moment's repose or rest, soon finding for them work to do which the men could themselves well and truly do.

At the same time, a word of warning is needed here against the enthusiastic, rather than intelligent, social reformer, who seeks to encourage the women to rebel against conditions, which, to the West, appear to be so cruel and wanton. If the rebellion happened to be successful,

as it might be, we soon would see a ship with no rudder—a woman, emancipated and free, but in no way equipped to justify her freedom. No ! changes must be slow, sober, and based on strong and secure foundations.)

Point No. 8

“ We desire to unite all in contesting our common tendency to be ‘ Mi hlem hle ’ while retaining just pride in the sincere achievement of all manly and courageous feats, especially those undertaken for the protection of our community, as well as in the industrious successes of our wives and families in their homes and in their schools.”

(The term “ Mi hlem hle ” implies a special kind of conceit—a conceit born of attachment to the form rather than to the substance. A Lushai would have little shame in holding an audience with a harangue copied word by word from another. A Lushai young man will shamefully proclaim from the house-tops his success with a young Lushai girl, whom he has seduced by professing promises of secrecy and constancy.

It is hoped to encourage among the people a feeling of self-reliance and just satisfaction with the results of a job well done, but to discourage cheap “ side ”, at once as hollow as it is unjustified.)

Point No. 9

“ Those of us who are Christians agree to recognise that we should bow to the authority of those who introduced us to Christianity, and that we shall be disloyal to them if we do not submit to the discipline, which it is their prerogative to demand.”

(In the present chrysalis stage of Lushai there are those who claim the right to dictate to their teachers on issues of doctrine and interpretations of the Holy Bible. Some will leave their Church in pique at a denial of such an unreasonable claim, or as a result of some measure of discipline, justly imposed.

The Government can hardly be concerned in the internal management of missions in the Hills, but undisciplined and rebellious elements of society are a menace to all. It is hoped this direction will be a corrective to an emotional and a changeable people.

The people are by instinct inconstant, and at the same time given to place their values far too high.)

Point No. 10

"We desire to inculcate into all our community the need for self-control and the avoidance of all excesses—a fault to which so many of us are subject and in all the achievement of this self-control we desire further to inculcate a true spirit of willing service and discipline into the young men, who are the nation of the future, recognising that without such proper and temperate discipline we cannot hope to be of any use to our clans, our families, or to any employers, or even to the faith which we may profess.

(The Lushai is given to excess. If he drinks Zu or tea he will often do so to excess. If he has a feast, it is implied that he will over-gorge. On one occasion an intelligent and enthusiastic missionary provided a play-room, so that the boys could have a central meeting place after school, in the hope that the boys would stray less to undesirable associations. The boys liked this idea so much they would not go to school !!

This direction is intended to encourage self-control and discipline. The tendency to change, in the Lushai make up, is a menace ; emotional and traditionally nomadic, sustained effort and conservatism are difficult to secure. The Lushai will often accept service with little or no consideration for his own obligations to the employer. As eagerly as he accepted the benefit of employment, so will he quickly give it up in a moment if it suits him. His employer receives scant, if any, consideration. Until it is possible to get the Lushais to overcome this defect, it will be increasingly difficult to secure opportunities and openings for them. But already rapid strides are being made to remedy this weakness.)

GENERAL, CONCERNING THE CODE

The cynic may decry this Ten Point Code. But what is his alternative ? Is it better to attempt a basic code, aimed at unity and consolidation, or to abandon the Lushai to flounder, ignorant and perplexed, in the morass which is not of his creation or within his objective understanding ?

In traditional Lushai there was no place for the politician. In modern Lushai the politician is needed but unavailable. Unless the administration supplies the lead, the people must drift like leaves on a stream or tremble as weak grass in a storm.

This code, coupled with the Welfare Committee System outlined above, could, in the fullness of time, create an initial inspiration towards self-Government throughout all the villages, a Government supported by an electoral mandate from the common people. With such a democratic foundation, would not the way be paved for an increasing development towards co-operative movements and a fair distribution of individual labour and production?

One of the strengths of the Communist Movement in China has lain in a democratic village system, which prevented privilege running riot at the cost of the people's productivity, law and order subsisting for support on a mandate from the common people.

PART 6

LUSHAI HILLS COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

The fact that backward people often have to eke out an existence in an environment where the average European would perish, is sometimes overlooked. But the harshness of such an environment tends to quicken man's resources, and many of these people possess a certain skill of which other folk would be justly proud. It should be part of a modern administrative policy to endeavour to harness any such traditional skill to the reins of modern commerce. To default in this is to imitate the dog and its proverbial bone, which it has no intention of putting to any use. An administration may strive at perpetuating a negative kind of *status quo*, but, like Canute's, the attempt must end in failure, for none can stem the insistent tide of an ever changing world. The encouragement of a backward people's traditional skill can do much to steady them in the face of ruthless cultural impacts.

In the case of Lushai, it was a District Officer and his wife, who perceived that the Lushais possessed a great skill

in cotton weaving on hand looms, traditionally in use from the times of their forefathers. The larger missions were invited to develop a connection with the Bengal Home Industries Association of Calcutta, an organisation sponsored by the Government of Bengal, which has done so much to encourage the indigenous cottage industries in that Province. This invitation gave no hopeful results. Fortunately, counter to precedent, the District Officer at this time was permitted a further tenure of office, which gave him and the people a common advantage in that he knew the Lushai language, the people, and their land. With a view to introducing the skill of the Lushais to the commercial markets, so that, among other things, the Lushai people could have something upon which to fall back in case of failure of the rice crop, the District Officer financed a Cottage Industries Organisation from his salary and borrowings from the Government and the bank. This course might well have proved infructuous, had not the District Officer been blessed with a skilful wife, who shared in much of his work among the people. The reason that the venture was privately financed was that these two joint organisers were too alive to the unreliable qualities of the Lushai people to wish to risk a reputation by asking Government to finance a proposition which could not safely be assured. Superficially, on the showing of articulate Lushai, the organisation only had to be started for it to be a success. The judgment of the joint organisers proved only too correct, articulate Lushai, in the main, having stood aside, while real Lushai made the enterprise the great success it has become.

Another special reason for the District Officer wishing to start the industries at this time was that he believed it would have a sobering effect on the revivalist movement which was in full swing among many adherents to the Welsh Mission, the movement which culminated in such excesses as the Kelkang movement, described in full in the previous chapter. It was on account of the seriousness of the local situation that the District Officer's wife agreed to the family finance being put up, and also to give up her normal life to the whole-time job of tackling a commercial

organisation among a people who had no understanding, appropriate education, or precedent, to guide them, on their part, towards the very distant goal of success.

The first task of the joint organisers was to conceive an article which could be made, and, having been made, which could be placed in competitive and unsheltered markets at prices which would enable the Lushai people to receive an appropriate return for their industry. It must be remembered that the joint organisers only aimed at filling up spare time with industry, which would bring a financial return, and this among a people, who had never had an opportunity of selling their skill for anything at all.

The first attempt nearly proved at the outset to be a last straw ! A rug made of unspun, white, tufted, locally grown cotton, was produced and accepted and production was then set in hand by an elaborate machinery, involving emissaries visiting villages with small samples of what was required, and publishing the prices for which finished articles would be purchased for cash by the joint organisers. On arrival, however, of the first consignment at the market concerned, a wire was received, which read something as follows :—

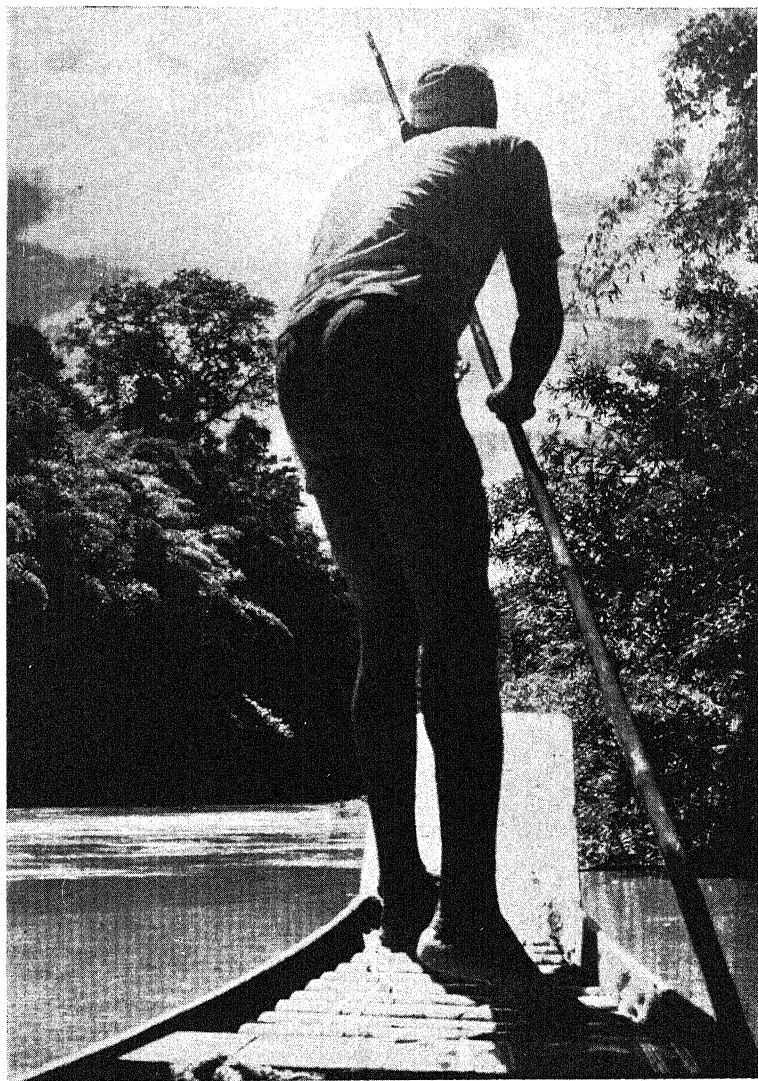
“ Consignment not up to standard—
Can accept no more.”

Villages several days' march away were engaged in making up cotton rugs to the orders of the joint organisers. Many were already on the looms. This, as bad luck would have it, occurred in March, when the people have their maximum leisure and their new cotton crop. There was nothing for it but to send out notices, far and wide, to proclaim that the joint organisers could accept the rugs up to a certain date only, a date which was fixed one month ahead. For these dreary weeks rug after rug was triumphantly and expectantly unfolded on the veranda of the Superintendent's residence, where all the business was being carried on for want of suitable accommodation. Each rug was duly measured, checked for standard, and paid for, with the full knowledge that one unfair refusal would spell ruin for ever to any hopes in the future. In the heat of April and May

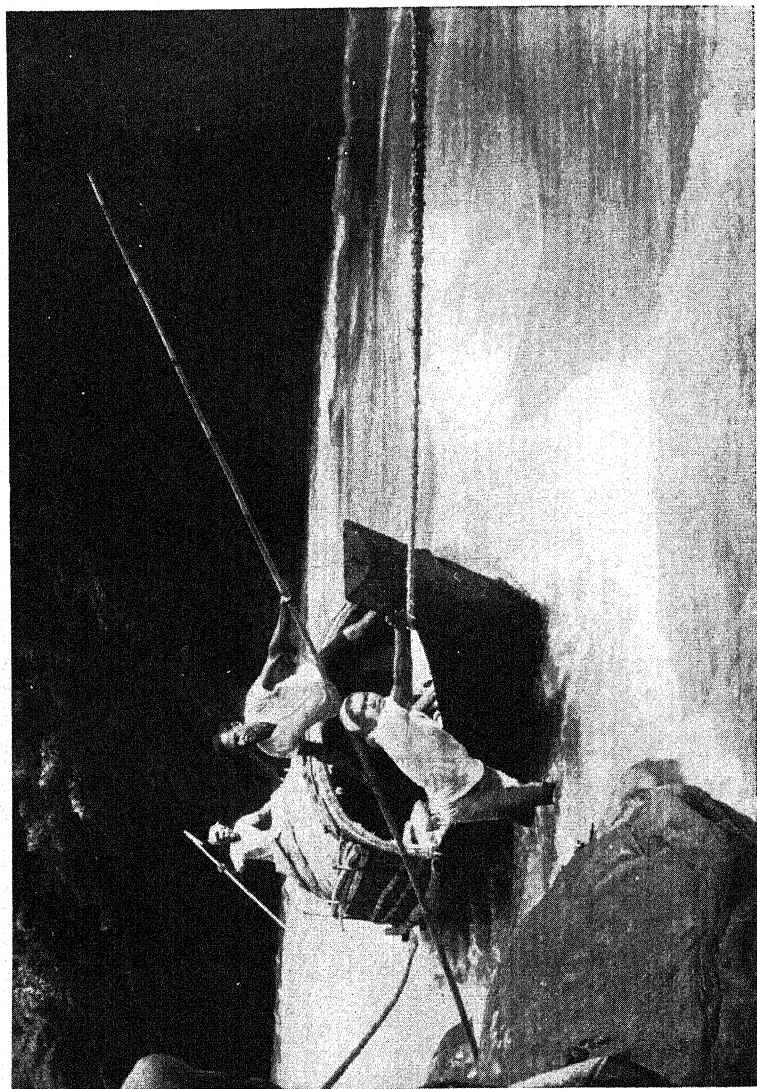
the backaching job of measuring rugs for dimension and standard went on, full price being paid on rug after rug, the joint organisers, knowing that each seven shillings and sixpence paid was irrecoverable. But with the help of their daughter, now Mrs. Henry Jackson, of Calcutta, this depressing situation was tackled bravely to the very end. The cost of this mistake, whoever's it may have been, was well over one hundred pounds. This was not an encouraging start to joint organisers, who stood to gain nothing beyond the satisfaction which attends the knowledge that their efforts would bring comfort and relief to many poor families.

Sometimes out of misery comes light. The joint organisers had at least discovered that the unsalaried and ordinary Lushai people were open to respond to such an invitation. Those who had responded had lost nothing, except the sanction to continue making. In the face of this discovery, it seemed cowardly to abandon the adventure, in spite of this colossal blow.

Experiments were put in hand on different lines. Ultimately, one was of outstanding success. After careful check, and the creative genius of Mrs. Joint Organiser, this sample was given a thorough test. It was accepted for delivery to Calcutta markets. The joint organisers then called for volunteers from the villages to come in to headquarters to learn the preparation of the cotton and its method of introduction into the warp. These volunteers had first to agree that they would pass on what they would learn to other willing village weavers. All this work was carried on in a broken-down old shed in the garden of the Superintendent's residence. Each rug completed to standard was paid for at the scheduled rates. The women were then sent away with orders to make one or two rugs to ensure that the product from their own homes would be in no way inferior to the one made under tuition. Results showed that those who had been taught preserved their standards, but the learners were too proud to be "told", and it was in this way the joint organisers got a glimpse of what lay below the surface of apparent demurity. Only two out of every ten rugs proved marketable, though full



A KEY MAN



BEGINNING TO GET ANGRY

price was always paid to the beginner, the loss to the industries' finances being regarded as capital outlay. Later on the price for poorly made rugs had to be reduced, but again, in the first place, to soften the bitter lessons of initial commerce, a slip was given guaranteeing to pay full price for the defective rug, if a new top standard rug was attempted and completed in such a way that it could be bought for full purchase price. Experience here confirmed the suspected trait that ordinarily the Lushai was not eager to emulate Robert Bruce by "Try ! Try ! Trying again !"

Running alongside such an unreliable basis of production, marketing could not be easy. Yet stocks began to accumulate, composed of good, bad, and indifferent rugs, all holding in their cynical silence an ever-mounting proportion of available capital. The product was unknown ; Aijal could not have been a more uncompromising centre from which to have to start, situated as it is over 100 miles from a railway, accessible by a very dangerous and rocky river, itself unserved by any regular boat system. It was at this stage that very welcome assistance was given by the Imperial Tobacco Company of India, whose resident manager, Mr. R. G. Baker,¹ came to the rescue by offering to accept first-grade rugs as gifts in the coupon system of the company. Gradually, the number of saleable rugs in every ten purchased increased, stocks of white rugs were soon absorbed by markets dealing in the sub-standard rugs, and it was not long before demand began to outstrip supplies, while enquiries for coloured rugs grew more and more insistent. The rug, by this time, had taken on a rich pile effect, the pile being of hand-spun cotton, tightly tufted into the warp and bound by the woof.

Lushais were sent to Calcutta, where, under the boundless patience and kind enthusiasm of DR. BOEGE, the Norwegian General Manager of the Havero Trading Company, they received a first class training in synthetic dyeing, based on the German INDANTHREN dyes. Any vegetable dyes, which are locally available, were not at that time capable of commercial application, due to the lack of known mordants

¹ Since made a "Companion of the Indian Empire," Mrs. Baker, his wife, being awarded the KAISAR-I-HIND medal for magnificent social work.

and the innumerable boilings which are necessary. So the Lushai Hills Cottage Industries grew from small beginnings, and the Superintendent's residence became swamped with stocks of rugs, cotton, book-keeping, packing material, and all the paraphernalia of business. It was Sir Robert Reid, Governor of Assam, and Lady Reid, who had become the patrons of the industries, who saw the need of an adequate building. It is to them that the industries owe the fine building of Reid House, named after the patrons, which provides for an office, large stock room, dye room, and large packing room. One of the main channels of offtake is the Assam Industries Association in Shillong, the seat of the Assam Government. This Association was initiated by Lady Reid herself, who, with the assistance of voluntary helpers from among the residents of Shillong, organised it for the purpose of accepting the products of Assam's clever, but isolated, cottage industry workers. Her efforts have been crowned by outstanding success, and the Assam Industries Association now stands firmly established, thanks to Lady Reid and her very hard-working helpers.

Reid House, Aijal, now buys offers of varying kinds, including coloured rugs as well as the white, net money bags, cane work, luncheon mats, ladies' handbags, aprons, and many other articles. Each village has been given a special colour, in the dyeing of which a village dyer has been specially trained. He is supplied with dyes, free of all costs, and is paid according to the return of standard rugs, which are entered against dye issue accounts in his personal note-book. When the proper number of rugs has been returned, he is issued with fresh dyes. Chief markets lie in Shillong, Calcutta, Bombay, and Silchar, in Assam. All that is produced is quickly sold. The assets are now double the issued capital. Government has assisted the industries latterly by a grant, equal to the staff charges, for a period of three years, which has eased the difficulty of liquid finance at a period of rapid expansion.

One difficulty faces the future, which is that the joint organisers must move on one day. For Reid House to prosper, the enterprise, vitality, and experience evinced by

the joint organisers, and given entirely free of any charges whatever, will have to be replaced by another agency. To meet this kind of difficulty the Government of Bengal has also broken the ice, by admitting the principle that grants in aid to cottage industries are justified. In India an agricultural community cannot ordinarily be prosperous without a second string to its bow in the form of cottage industries, while cottage industry workers cannot be successful unless their industry is profitably and satisfactorily organised. Workers tucked away in little shanties, applying themselves in their spare time at exquisite crafts, have for too long been obliged to bring in their wares to offer them to a hard-hearted financial dealer, a moneylender, who, as often as not, buys cheap and supplies raw materials on credit at high rates. Let such a channel be replaced by a well-run marketing centre, a cottage industries association, prepared to run on lines which permit the highest purchase prices, most economical overheads, and all possible freight concessions on raw materials and finished products, and the little unknown, patient, craftsman can handle unprecedented money for his industry, money which will surely swell the offtake of the city manufacturers, who, in turn, will make over additional income-tax to the Government financing the grants, which have brought life to this hidden man. Such an idea is by no means any silvery moonbeam of lunacy. It should be possible to exchange the services of the present joint organisers, here and elsewhere, by a qualified salaried manageress, or capable art graduate, bent on art and the social uplift of the people. He would be placed on a secured salary, and open to a sliding scale of commission, so that he would share in the success of his co-workers, reduce running costs to the minimum, buy high to secure goodwill, sell well to make certain of his offtake.

The organisation includes no institutionalisation. The joint organisers realise that one hundred workers under one roof might produce a more rapid out-turn of a more mass-produced pattern. But, while bringing prosperity to a few, drawn from their country homes, this method of production would make no real contribution to the social

uplift of a whole people. On the other hand, much that lies behind Reid House may be of interest.

1. Whatever may be the fluctuations of the commodity market, the prices assured for articles manufactured for Reid House remain steady, and realise at least two to three times the average price of export cotton, sometimes more.
2. Reid House aims at raising the internal price of cotton, which is very low, about three shillings and sixpence for 80 pounds, by creating an internal demand, which would render the people less dependent on wholesale buyers for the mills.
3. Communities, who produce a minimum of 200 rugs per year, are paid a rebate of 5 per cent on each rug bought by Reid House at full price. Half this rebate goes towards financing the needs of the Welfare Committees mentioned earlier in this chapter, and the other half to the Chief, in recognition of custom and the fact that he has had to encourage the people to become more industrious for their own good.

One village at least can now maintain a trained nurse, who acts as village midwife, and the results have already made a tremendous impression on these country people.

This concession enables an industrious community to benefit further by the self-help return of rebate, which goes to help tackle their social uplift side of life.

4. A village, which is well established as a cottage industry village, has a second cash string to its bow, if the rice crop fails. In villages where no second string exists communities suffer for want of food. This reduces vitality, exposes the people to wasting diseases, reacts on the mothers and the unborn children, and, in fact, sets the whole community back for years.
5. Reid House improvises some work for any or all—cripples, expectant mothers, or the very poor—while the energetic can help sons at the distant high school in Shillong, or can buy foods to help to implement a diet which is nutritionally unbalanced.

6. Among cottage industry workers a cementing of family friendship is noticeable, as all have a common interest in coming together in profitable enterprise.

The importance of a woman, who is a clever weaver, is early recognised, and this will do far more good for her than any amount of sermons, adjuring rather indolent man to treat his womenfolk better. The education value in the insistence on cleanliness, precision, and perseverance, cannot easily be over-emphasized.

7. Reid house encourages the survival of the people's own designs, as only Lushai designs are used by the joint organisers in colour schemes and weaves. These designs were fast dying out, as was hand-weaving. Reid House has revived an interest in hand spinning and processing indigenous cotton, at the expense of cheap importations from foreign lands.
8. Reid House buys all the products made up in the local jail by inmates, who are taught cottage industries. This is an immediate passport to a secured existence after release from jail. In a number of cases, released men have been set on their legs in this way.

In the case of one woman "lifer" Reid House credits a rebate on every cloth she weaves, and the post office savings account is gradually increasing to prove a nest-egg for her when her dreary suppression is over at long last, and in the meantime her work has taken on an entirely new aspect, which should help to lighten her long days.

9. Reid House provides an approximate centre for the encouragement of research into any and all phases of Lushai Land's resources, like medicinal plants, forest produce, and their marketability, or indigenous arts, like metal or lacquer processing, and, in fact, any channel for the material and cultural strengthening of the people.

A rug is bought for a price which represents what a man can get, if he is lucky, by carrying a fifty pound load fifteen miles a day for ten days without a stop. The rug cotton can be procured without a man leaving his village

for more than three hours in all. The rest of the time he can be processing in his own village.

The Lushai Hills Cottage Industries, it is true, failed to prevent the outbreak at Kelkang, but since Kelkang there has been no further chronic abandon among the people. Is it possible that Reid House, together with the other measures discussed in this chapter, has introduced into the minds of the people more solid food for thought than the perpetual round of petty scandal, intrigue, and mischief?

The joint organisers sought for an endowment trust of six thousand pounds to secure the salary of a manageress from the resultant income, but the outbreak of the War crashed all hopes for perpetuating the Lushai Hills Cottage Industries in this way. Profits meet all but the expenses of a qualified manageress. In time these may also be found, but many Lushais are naturally very slow to raise their status by industry, though quick to accept benefits which involve no effort.

The late Sir Harry Cole, while serving in the Lushai Hills, encouraged the growing of orange trees in the Hills. It was not till thirty years had elapsed, and there was increasing evidence of their use, that the growing of oranges gained any fresh impetus from the people themselves. So it will be with the industries. The articulate, generally speaking, stand aloof. These are Lushais with academic experience, but this seems to atrophy, rather than fire, ambition and creation. But time only will tell. In the meantime, there would be great wailing in several hundred homes if Reid House were to "close its doors". On the other hand, in any emergency, there could be few better people than the Lushais. On one occasion during the time that the Industries were in a jam, due to falling behind in contractual deliveries to the Imperial Tobacco Company, the Senior Pastor of the Welsh Mission, Pu Chhuakhama, the most influential Lushai trader in the Hills, Pu Pachhunga, and a member of the Presbytery Pu Thanga, a Government employee, with some others, all went out to the villages under conditions of great arduousness, abandoning for the time, specially, their normal calling, and through their efforts a very close position was happily

negotiated. They were prepared to suffer to save a situation which is often such a strong characteristic of the Lushais. This splendid effort was made partly because the Superintendent, who was also a joint organiser of the Lushai Hills Cottage Industries, in close consultation with Mrs. Joint Organiser, flatly declined to break an unbroken record of never once applying one iota of force or unfair influence to make the industries a success, a temptation which must be obvious.

The future, on the whole, augurs well, in no small way due to the characteristic stand taken by Miss Katie Hughes¹ of the Welsh Mission, who is in charge of girls' education in the North Lushai Hills. She has included, on her own initiative, the growing and processing of cotton as one of her very interesting project lessons. In this way the young Lushai girl is being educationally encouraged. The girls even make up small doormats, as exercises, and these are purchased by Reid House, more or less regardless of any commercial consideration, so as to encourage the children for the future. Miss Hughes' girls frequently head the boys in the joint middle examinations, and it is not unlikely that much of the secret lies in Miss Hughes' wisdom in knowing that academic education, which excludes training in handicrafts, is rarely productive of good results.

PART 7

CONCLUSION

So much can be done with very limited finance. It is not possible to generalise about the treatment of backward races. Their backwardness is often of dissimilar origins. But use of a deliberate technique in administrative approach to the problem of the Lushai chrysalis has much to commend it. It marks a very great advance on the day-to-day stagnation, which can so easily characterise our administrative attention towards a problem which requires much more scientific treatment than it has ever yet received.

¹ Holder of the Kaisar-i-Hind Medal for public services.

That cultural encouragement so much desired by Parliament, must remain a fantasy, unless efforts to secure this are backed by perseverance and finance. In considering finance, the principle of contributory effort should be insisted upon, in the shape of money or labour, according to the magnitude and importance of the need. There is a regrettable tendency in other continents to encourage the erection of magnificent buildings, though happily often fashioned against the environmental background, which are on a scale far in advance of the potential resources of the land. The underlying idea would seem to be that the rising intelligentsia should be encouraged to think in terms of the latest scientific inventions and modern grandeur of vision, though there is in the background the understandable desire to impress by the excellence of such institutions. Where hospitals, schools, or other needs are under contemplation their shape should be determined, as far as is possible, by the potential resources of the environment, and not by those of the Government or organisation affording the financial assistance. If there is no will to contribute, there is no case to squander resources in more urgent need elsewhere. If spectacular buildings and grandiose schemes are sponsored, it will surely be found that indigenous effort towards cultural uplift will be atrophied. The disparity will produce a sense of hopelessness, tempered by an irresponsible dissatisfaction among the people themselves.

Administration all through should be characterised by the one salient fact, which is that it has to be applied to a backward people, probably living in remote areas, almost certainly badly served by communications or literacy. To attempt always to insist on standards amenable and understandable to the Treasury Bench Secretariat, finance, and accounts mentalities is to cause frustration, if not misdirection. Bureaucracy must, in fact, aim at borrowing some of the warm humanity, which characterises mission enterprise, while still resisting any tendency to let the heart wholly rule the head !

How can strict budgetting procedure, based on modern conditions of speedy communication and intercourse within very enlightened democracies, be sensibly attempted in the

backward areas of our Empire, with any hope that good value for money spent will be secured ?

To attempt clockwork precision in a land where there are no clocks, is to encourage the disgorging of money without adequate return, and, what is more important still, the bad example so given is contrary to all our instructions to the people !

Mr. Compton Mackenzie, in his book, *Windsor Tapestry*, quotes Lord Rosebery as using words which have a peculiar affinity with the case of backward lands, when he pleaded for Scotland in the following terms : “. . . a national demand for that local power of self-government, which would cause the business of Scotland, so long neglected in England, to be settled in Scotland. . . .” Substitute backward areas for Scotland, and the Treasury Bench for England, and we present the backward area case.

Administration should always be kept to its most simple and appropriate form. The habit of introducing the complexities experienced in dealing with the affairs of a politically emancipated people can be resisted in connection with a simple people, until conditions and progress by themselves demand a more precise machinery for administration. The principle of any superimposition from above, except when life is endangered, is fundamentally unsound. Pains are necessary to ensure that there will be a measure of understanding by the people of all innovations.

In the changing personnel of Government Officers can lie one profuse cause for ill-considered changes, a tendency encouraged when there is no known policy to act as a public guide, and when there is no Durbar, or Ruler, exercising consultative functions in co-operation with the principal Government Officer of the territory. To help to meet this common and well-known danger, the Lushai Hills has its District Cover, a copy of which, to include essential instruction, is in the possession of all the Chiefs. This helps to inform the people of their rights, as well as their obligations, and can help to secure the body politic from violent and erratic assaults. This particular production, even if it is far from perfect, was derived from over 1,000 different contradictory and redundant orders passed

from time to time by transitory Officers, to meet the needs of the moment. These rules rendered themselves ineffective, as, in equity, no penalties could be administered for their breach !

Without responsibility, there must be stagnation or decadence. The technique, which has been applied to the confusing conditions of Lushai at her chrysalis stage, attempts to invite the people and their rulers to an ever-growing sense of interest in, and responsibility for, their national affairs. If the rulers of the people can show the necessary genius the Durbar will be able to develop more and more, and the vision of this Durbar handling its own finances, incidence of taxation, and development, with due guidance and assistance for some decades from a representative of Government, is not a mere fantasy.

But, alternatively, if a policy and an administrative technique cannot be sustained, the situation will relapse to mere improvised, uncreative, rule, the people gradually sinking into despair, disintegration, and agitation, as the sense of contest between ruler and ruled grows, with no corrective machinery to absorb the mistakes which must inevitably be made.

A suitable formula for a policy would be something on these lines. "Whereas the Government of . . . has now had considerable experience in dealings with the inhabitants of . . . it is its wish that a more energetic policy of understanding, more intimately, the indigenous instincts and reactions of the people's hearts, be now pursued by all responsible persons, who may be called upon to associate with the inhabitants of these lands. The lives of these excellent peoples have been subjected to confounding experiences by the influences of a rapid culture contact with virile and widely informed civilisations. The Government is of the opinion that the only way by which the disturbing effects of this rapid culture contact may be lessened is for workers to make a deeper study of the ever-threatened framework of the indigenous culture of the people. With an ever-closer and deeper understanding of the natural feelings of these people it should be increasingly easy to ensure that the advantageous lessons of modern science

and experience are introduced among them by measures based upon the vital pillars of tribal and communal structures, only those elements of indigenous culture being disregarded, which are repugnant to our sense of good government and social order. It is believed that in such approach lies the hope of co-operation, without which effort may well be misspent.

Medical, industrial, educational, agricultural, and all uplift influences should be specially designed and directed to ensure, as far as possible, that the people will be able to absorb them as part and parcel of their own cultural system, whereby they will come the easier to look upon such innovations as their very own, and, therefore, with a constantly enlightening enthusiasm.

In pursuance of this conception of the approach to the succour of a people in the face of an ever-changing degree and kind of culture impact, it is the desire of the Government that any, who are engaged in the practice of any form of unindigenous religion may be persuaded so to order their approach to the task that ruthless assaults on taboos may be avoided in favour of a patient adaptation from indigenous culture, encouraging a gradual growth from within, the people thus being spared unsuitable superimpositions of alien form.

The Government would be glad if all concerned would take notice of their wish that District Officers should be the co-ordinating agencies of policies declared by Government, and that all within the jurisdiction of such Officers should adopt, as far as they possibly can, policies along such lines, as may be desired and indicated by District Officers, they themselves being faithful to continuity, and all executive departmental budgets being submitted through the District Officers, as co-ordinating centres of all effort.

In the matter of education, it is the Government's desire that, so far as is possible, an education curriculum should be so devised, that it is no slave to any alien convention, but rather contains the means by which education, in the widest, and not conventional sense, may reach the masses, and not only a privileged few, their associates or dependents, and that it should contain the means by which the whole

life of the community or village can be enriched through the flowering of the genius of the people. In this way it is hoped that education, while countering, not sanctioning, disintegration, will help to bridge the gap between indigenous civilisation and the impacts of more powerful and virile contacts.

The Government is of opinion that changes are only desirable with the co-operation of, and at the wish of, the peoples of the land. It is the view of the Government that much harm is done by over-enthusiastic workers desiring more speedy results than the magnitude of the task can possibly permit.

The Government is of firm opinion that the principles enunciated form a contribution to the problem of co-relating modernity with remote civilisations, and that where missions are, through considerable expenditure and staff, exercising strong influences, District Officers should, on a basis of mutual co-operation, in which the missions should unstintingly share, suggest to the missions from time to time lines along which it is Government's wish that social work should proceed.

The Government will, as and when circumstances permit, take steps to facilitate Officers, specially selected, taking courses in social anthropology with a view to improving their administrative capacity. The Government is, moreover, of opinion that only those Officers, who show aptitude in the science of social anthropology should ordinarily be placed in executive charges, and that those selected should enjoy reasonable security of tenure.

In the matter of medical assistance for a people living in a land of vast distances, poorly served by any means of rapid communication, a policy is favoured that is based on prevention rather than cure. To this end it is more desirable to institute itinerant public health officers, capable of affording their people assistance in matters of elementary ailments, hygiene, and maternity welfare, than to aim at equipping elaborately, hospitals and dispensaries, to which few can come, and at which it will often occur that there is none competent to carry out the surgery for which the extravagant equipment has been provided.

Moreover, it is the Government's firm wish and intention that prospective measures, which, from time to time, appear not only necessary, but no longer avoidable, should, without fail, be preceded by a comprehensive and educative approach covering all important elements of the community. That this may take time, which can even extend to years, the Government are fully aware, but they are also of opinion that, with due regard to the legacies of time immemorial, advances so made will increase the mutual trust between the Governors and the governed."

Some such enunciation of policy would provide a compass for our journey, and the pace should be a ruminating tempo ; cracking of the whip, visibly or metaphorically, to hasten the pace will produce more bitterness than progress.

While this administrative technique has been applied specially to Lushai, in support of a more general application of its underlying principles, in whole or in part, to other territories, one may quote that eminent and constructive statesman, Lord Hailey, in an address delivered to a joint meeting of the Royal Empire Society and Royal African Society in London, when he spoke as follows :—

"Native Africa differed widely from India in almost every condition which touched the task of administration. Nevertheless, there was much in which the African Government could profit by our Indian experience. The real question which had to be considered was, whether any development based on the creation of Parliamentary institutions was the most suitable form of Government for an African native population.

It was no disloyalty to the British traditions to ask that, while opportunity still served, we should consider whether it was not possible to devise for the African some other system that would suit all his circumstances, while allowing to him in due season the largest possible share in the management of his own affairs.

The African was singularly lacking in that deep-seated attachment to his own customs and his own religion which made for resistance to new influences. But if at any time it appeared to be an unduly heavy task to bring into line with our civilization a people so far removed from ourselves

those whose responsibility it was might take inspiration from the thought that they were engaged in an experiment in the transformation of human society such as the world had perhaps never yet seen, and would most certainly never see again."

Thus, there are many more besides Lushai, whose destiny will depend on what kind of democracy will ultimately emerge after this ordeal by fire. That it can not, and must not, be the democracy or bureaucracy, which invited two certain wars, over the heads of our people, is definite. Can we hope that it will be a democracy, confident in itself, seeking no Maginot shield from her responsibilities on the lines of the ill-fated League of Nations? Had democracy's motives been pure, the League would not have failed. It was made the spiritual Maginot Line behind which vested interests, materialism and expediency could, and did, find full play to the cost of all humanity.

Ours must be a democracy founded on a spiritual determination to serve all mankind within our associated responsibilities, and to find the finance which will be needed through the labour of our minds and of our bodies. Only in this way shall we find in God's eyes the reply to Adolf Hitler's prescription :—

"It is a crime against the Eternal Creator to train the dark races for intellectual careers. They should be trained like dogs."

CHAPTER X

LUSHAI SMALL TALK

As long ago as 1905 Colonel Shakespear, C.M.G., C.I.E., D.S.O., writing in retrospect, when he was Political Agent in Manipur State, wrote of the Lushai that :—

“ In spite of many defects the Lushais are by no means a disagreeable people to have to deal with, and they have great capabilities which will repay cultivating”.

It has always been just those great capabilities which have been the cause of some of the recriminations to which Lushais have, from time to time, been subject. European officials, civil and military, have frequently perceived the possibilities inherent in the Lushai people, but have turned from them, sometimes with a sense of frustration, on realisation that their hopes and beliefs have been shattered, much as the over-ambitious parent can turn against the promising offspring, who fails to satisfy earlier hopes. In the various chapters of this book we have had glimpses of the Lushai in history, his social life, and his cultural background, and his reactions in the face of cataclysmic disturbance. We have held him under the political microscope disintegrating his cultural soul. We can surely now feel justified in holding that in his simple defects should lie the inspiration of our task. So let us leave the clinical laboratory, and, before leaving Aijal to go out from Lushai once more, recall the Lushai, as in fact we generally find him, enthusiastic, cheerful, full of courage, and a very friendly friend.

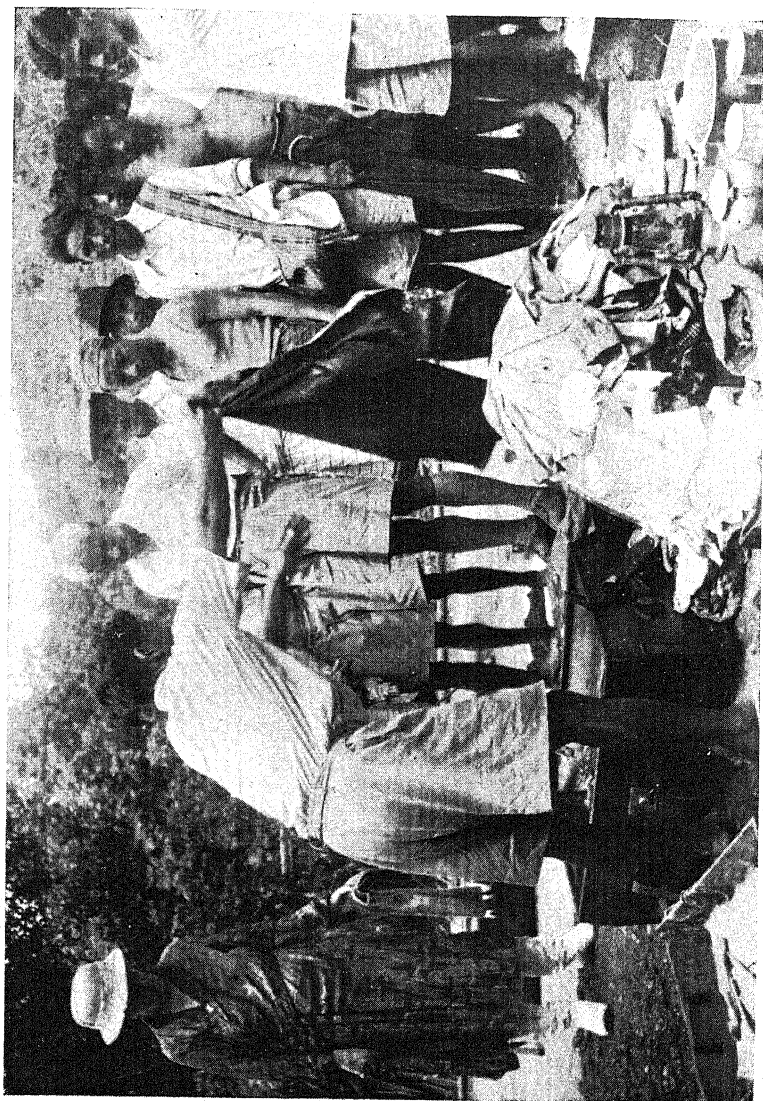
What a lot of fun he provides ! What great response he will make to an appeal. Over twenty-five years ago, when modern Lushai was indeed very young, he flocked to meet urgent and needy calls by Britain for men prepared to work, and to help to secure the lines of communications

for our various armies, while some of his associates in other territories spent their time in organised and armed rebellion against their authorities.

Naturally, the Lushai could gather no clear picture of what could lie ahead of him, but, by March, 1917, he had heard from the missionaries, the markets, and other sources, of the cruel deeds which were being perpetrated by the Germans, of the iron houses on wheels with guns that belched forth their death from inside (TANKS !), of the aeroplanes, which swooped and dropped bombs to annihilate men and material, of the daily casualties, which in the aggregate for one month, amounted to the Lushai conception of half the people in all the world ! All this and much else, even the under-water craft, which prowled about to sink and to kill things called ships, of which only the smallest modicum of Lushai had even had a vision. It was among a people, bearing vague ideas on these harrowing thoughts, that Lushais in Government service appealed for recruits in phrases of high-sounding language, gratitude to the British Government that had given them light from darkness, peace from chaos, and money from destitution. But the appeal, which was actually understood by the people, was the promise of relief from the payment of the three shillings per year house tax for life, accompanied by immunity from the much detested impressment labour, in the case of all who returned victorious from the wars. The Lushais greatly resented having to carry what they called the sepoys' "Fat wives" and their children, while the sepoys behind them kick and beat them along the roads. This treatment, unknown to any British officers, had been accorded, even by the Lushais themselves, when they had become sepoys !

Discussions took place in many parts. Few young men had experienced days of unrest, head-hunting expeditions, long hours of sentry duty, and few had been absent from their homes for more than a very few days at any one time. There was talk that the Lushais conceived no debt which compelled them to comply with Government's needs beyond those to which they were already subject. Little of the older generation's counsel served to allay such ideas.

WRECKED



THE PENALTY FOR FAILURE !



The Lushai idea of portraying Mr. Winston Churchill making a stirring address to a British audience.

They had suffered defeat, and possessed the outlook of a conquered people.

But, as so often happens, news got around that some young men had been so brave as to join up, which nettled others, who saw themselves despised of the belles of the villages on the return of the heroes back from the wars. Numbers then came forward increasingly. Lushai recruits found themselves having to stand naked for close medical examination by an Indian doctor, which caused considerable annoyance in the knowledge that, but for a few years, he would have had his head nipped off for his troubles ! Much had to be learned, and the Lushai gift for humour began to assert itself to bring a more reassuring outlook. Gurkha non-commissioned officers were copied saying "RITE TUN", "LEP TUN", commands which involved much confusion. In desperation, when the non-commissioned officer wanted the men to turn to the left he would point to a certain village known to all, so that they turned correctly on the order "LEP TUN". But the poor fellow met his Waterloo when he had some four hundred men on parade for an inspection, as fate decreed they were to be aligned up quite differently from their usual parade line. Of course, with complete faith, the Lushais responded with alacrity to orders by facing the same old villages, and the ensuing pandemonium so amused the Lushais that the non-commissioned officer got very angry. But it was only a matter of days before the Lushais soon settled down to their elementary drill, being naturally clever and adaptable.

So their great army set forth, an army of men from a backward people, facing entire social disruption to take part in a fight about which they knew nothing, except that for a man to be a man he should be prepared to fight, if need there be. Small belongings, which meant so much, were nestled into a little bundle of motley, by some loving sister or lover, in the sense that these were part of themselves to help guard their men on this challenge to fate. Fathers stood by with faces grave for their sons' safety, and in the realisation that the heavy tasks of weeding and cultivating would now fall upon them, elderly as they were daily becoming. Mothers wept without restraint, confused,

and with no understanding. Advice and encouragement were on all sides—"Remember God always. Whatever may come—do no evil ! Hear no evil !—Say no evil !"

Could there have been any greater sacrifice by carefree youth and hard-pressed old age, anything more simple and childlike ? Such people are a great people. "They have great capabilities, which will repay cultivating."

Thus, at the end of April, 1917, 2,100 fine young Lushai men marched out from Aijal in the 27th Indian Labour Corps, the contingent from the South Lushai Hills, under the late Captain Jack Needham, of the Imperial Police Service, being late in arriving. Colonel Playfair and the Rev. D. E. Jones, of the Welsh Mission, served with the North Lushai contingent. One old Lushai seeing the gallant array moving off uttered words which became true enough : "If so great a number of our young men are now going to the war, the Germans will surely be nowhere."

What experiences ! The Lushais, on their way to Bombay, found themselves in a whirl of staggering novelty. People, people, and more people, roaring houses on wheels, hooting motor cars, impetuous bicycles, endless varieties of coloured drinks, lights like fallen stars ! Spirits rose, and despite turbans they could not fit, boots they could not fill, pants they could not keep up, these Lushais became men of the outside world, as if overnight.

Some among those brightly lit-up eyes were a little dimmed, as they became aware beyond escape that even land had disappeared from sight as the Union Castle steamer forged her way forward on her hazardous journey from Bombay to Marseilles, soon plunging in the stormy seas, which reduced the bulk of the Lushais to six comatose days.

As in the ship, so in France, the Lushais made great friends with the sailors and the soldiers, about whose kindness to them they are united in unreserved praise. Action was some panacea for the thoughts of Lushai Land, the little walks to and from the cultivation with the girl friend—the assignments—the pungent tobacco—and the smells of the jungles—one day in Port Said had thrilled. Malta

had been associated with a dangerous submarine attack, only confounded by the rapid laying of a smoke screen and the intrepid rapidity of the counter measures taken by the destroyer escort, which included Numbers 5 and 72, measures which made the most profound impression on the Lushais.

On arrival at La Valentine camp in Marseilles a mail from Lushai Land awaited these brave and confused adventurers upon whom had been showered little gifts of fruits, flowers, and vegetables, as they marched through the crowds of French people.

Soon feelings of alarm were rekindled, as the party rumbled along through country and town, showing mutilation, shell craters, broken trees, and villages sometimes totally deserted. In their first camp at Monchy-au-Bois, twelve miles south and west of Arras, they were within the sound of the guns. Spirits were low, apprehension high. But with dawn came a thrill, for the Lushais found themselves in camp just near a wide mustard field—mustard which is the joy of every Lushai, mustard, of which they had had no taste since they left their homes. The excitement was intense, and war took on a more rosy hue !

In their work of excavation they were associated with British soldiers, whom they first thought would be overlords and hard taskmasters. But when they found the cheerful and splendid way in which these men worked, they were both astonished and reassured. A canteen was started, and a cinema soon purchased from the profits. They were visited by the Rev. Mr. Lorrain, of the London Baptist Mission, in the South Lushai Hills, and greatly encouraged by his visit. The Lushais salvaged girders and corrugated tin of a value far in excess of the costs of their transportation to France. Life was not without its tragedies, one Lushai being blown to bits by a bomb left hidden by the Germans, while another lost two fingers from the explosion of another bomb.

In the meantime the war was not static. Lushais were under fire at Nesle, and others had to evacuate Peronne at short notice, costing them their beloved cinematograph and many records. The Lushais on this occasion did

splendid work in the face of aeroplane and artillery attack by loading ammunition, day and night, pressing also for the right to possess rifles with which to join in the counter-attack. The same request was repeated, when the Lushais were forced back into Amiens during the March 1918 push by the German armies, because they were enraged at seeing how the German aeroplanes were shooting down the French women and children.

Their obligation being at an end, the great day came, when the orders for the return of the Lushais to their land arrived. Their hour of pride, their moment of success, were near. They had done their duty. They had risked all, and ventured out into a great unknown, and they had stood the test.

On arrival back at Aijal, they were met with a welcome, ringing with joy and emotion. They were piped in by the Battalion Band, and encountered a cheering crowd of thousands assembled on the parade ground to welcome them. They came back, 2,029 men out of the 2,100, who originally set out. In this war also the Lushai has availed himself of every offer open to him. He seeks the martial, rather than the administration side, unless he belongs to the educated classes, in which case there is a strong desire for commissioned rank, wherever it may lead, alternative choices lying rather with clerical or such-like appointments. Many have joined up in the Assam Rifles, the Assam Regiment, or the Indian Army Hospital Corps, while many who have been unsuccessful in such quests, have willingly agreed to serve in any labour corps, which might at any time be formed. The authorities have refrained, as a policy, from any recruiting propaganda, and no man is taken, unless he appears with a report from his village Civic Guard committee, of which the Chief is President, to the effect that he is a first-class villager, that if he joins up his family will not be cast into destitution, and that none is relying upon him to send money for the upkeep of his village home. This procedure has resulted in many faulty selections being avoided. The recruiting was all done by the District Authorities, and the system of paying cash rewards to individuals for recruits produced

was never applied in Lushai, which must be an experience almost unique in itself. We can feel, therefore, that all these Lushai men are real volunteers, and most have gone without wishing to institute any bargains relating to gratuities, privileges, or concessions.

Enthusiasm for the war in general was helped along by the result of consulting the oracles in the form practised from time immemorial by Lushais, when the opening of hostilities was being contemplated. Two snails are procured from the river sides, and one is called Britain, the other the enemy. These are put at each other on a battle-field, confined in a hollowed-out bamboo trough, and so they usually fight. Despite the fact that in a number of villages where this was tried out, the larger snail was called Germany, invariably the British snail won in the end ! In several cases the large German snail attacked vigorously, the British snail being compelled to give way, but after holding his enemy at bay, just when he seemed beaten, he would counter-attack and completely rout the German snail, turning him out of the trough. The universal success achieved by these British snails gave great satisfaction throughout the hills !

One Chief, in sending in some young men as volunteers, sent a letter, in which he said that he would be very glad if his young men were taken, as they wished so much to go, but for himself, speaking purely personally, he had to admit it was very unpleasant to lose four young men, as they were so very useful in digging graves, carrying the sick and dead bodies, etc., etc. The 'etc.' were not disclosed, but after what was disclosed no one dared probe further.

A lot is missed by residence in Lushai, without knowing the language, but at the same time the learning of the language can be painful for any, who lacks the treasure of humour.

On one occasion, a Lushai servant came in to announce in Lushai to the housewife that there were, so we understood, three bears in the garden. So the housewife rushed to her daughter, and told her there were three bears in the garden—and that she was to tell the servants to shut all the doors—and not to go outside. Then the housewife called the

man, who gave her the information, and asked him to take her to where they could actually see the three bears. So she opened the door stealthily to let out the servant, and they went out. He then pointed, so she looked, but could not see the three bears.

So he pointed again. The housewife, rather rattled by this time, said : "But I can only see cows." The Lushai replied : "That's all I said there were, just three cows in the garden ! !"

The confusion all arose from the Lushai habit of speaking without opening the mouth at all widely, the word for cow being SEBAWNG, and the word for bear being SAVAWM ! !

It is only to be expected that Lushais should occasionally express themselves unusually when using English. On one occasion a Lushai of some standing was invited to a tea, to be given by the wife of the Superintendent, to which he replied with becoming nonchalance "Oh ! Don't bother !"

The Lushai mind will always be fertile in its aptitude to find means for its expression in the everyday. As modernity becomes more common, the Lushai genius for adaptability will exert itself in its own form. An amusing incident is one concerning a milestone. A Lushai village, fully alive to the recognition afforded to mile-posts on the Government bridle paths, decided to erect milestones along their own village tracks. But where the measured mile fell at an unsuitable place, perhaps too near a village site, they quite merrily planked it down at a spot which they believed would reduce risk of damage at the hands of the children to a minimum.

There must be many children of the West, who have contemplated with awe the latent strength of pythons as they browsed impotently in their zoo enclosures. In Lushai, however, the python has been accorded a very privileged position, due to its lack of desire to cause humans any harm. No Lushai will ever to-day, willingly, kill a python, paying deference to the age-long tradition that only harm would come to his family, his crops, or himself. The only clan who can kill a python is the Chongthu clan, because in ancient days a python in curious circumstances

did kill and swallow a Chongthu man. For this reason the Chongthus alone can, with impunity, kill the browsy python.

Although Lushai Land must be one of the safest places in the world, considerable presence of mind, humour, and self-reliance, are necessary for the handful of Europeans living in the Hills. They often have to live quite alone for long stretches at a time, and, as the percentage of lunacy in Lushai is as high as in any other district of India, incidents are apt to occur.

One officer and his wife were the proud possessors of a baby boy. One night the father was awakened, he did not know by what. He peered at his wife and perceived she was fast asleep. So he lifted his mosquito net, and looked out around the room. To his horror he saw a Lushai woman sitting on a chair, wearing a homburg hat, and nursing his little son of only a few months of age. His predicament was nerve racking. If he made a noise, the woman, in alarm, might throw down the child. If he crept up to her, the surprise might cause an involuntary incident. He decided to take the risk of a dive at her, and, luckily, he secured the child without injury. He then had to lure the woman to an outhouse for the night, and she nearly put it on fire ; a nice lady that one.

Another woman suddenly appeared at night, and stood at the open door of the drawing-room of the Superintendent's residence, where the Superintendent, his wife and daughter, were sitting after dinner. The daughter caught sight of the intruder, and attracted the attention of the others, when the Superintendent got up, seized a mechanical oil lamp, which had no shade, and went towards the woman. He took her by the arm, and led her out towards the gate opening from the garden on to the road, which was some fifty yards away from the house. Half way along, however, a snappy gust of wind extinguished the light on this quite dark night ; and the Superintendent found himself clutching a lunatic woman with one hand, the other holding the extinguished lamp ! The Gilbertian situation was only relieved by the arrival of a groom, with a hurricane lamp, who had heard the Superintendent shouting towards the staff quarters.

One night, when the moon was nearly full, and the cold was dry and biting, the Superintendent's wife heard a slight coughing at about two in the morning. She woke up her husband, and the two of them sleuthed about on tip-toe from one dark room to another, looking out cautiously on to the veranda, seeking for clues. At this time the veranda was littered with boxes and rugs in connection with the affairs of the Lushai Hills Cottage Industries, which were being conducted at the Superintendent's residence. Nothing resembling a human could be spotted. So the Superintendent decided to slip out at the back of the house, make a large detour, call up some of the staff, and converge on the veranda from both sides, one party carrying a lamp, while the Superintendent stood by in the dark ready with an electric torch to fall upon anyone who tried to make a getaway. While this was going on, the unfortunate wife was left in a massive bungalow, pitch dark, not knowing what was going to happen next! The staff carrying the lamp duly arrived at the veranda and proceeded to search with no result, which was too much for the Superintendent, who then came on to the veranda from his place of hiding in the dark. On closer examination, the coughing was traced to a little pyramidal bundle sitting tucked away in a heap of rugs, quite indistinguishable from her surroundings. Inside was a dazed old luny woman, who had sought shelter from the biting cold of a winter's night. All that could be done was to leave her where she was.

But these nerve-racking experiences are not always confined to the activities of lunatics. There was an occasion, for instance, when the Superintendent was on one of his tours, which usually involved an absence of one month to seven weeks. His wife and daughter were left alone in his residence. One day the time for tea came round, but no tea was produced. After waiting and waiting the family got its own tea, and in due course servants, who were due to come on duty at 6 o'clock in the evening, duly came and removed the tea. Shortly, the man who should have given tea at four o'clock appeared, hazily, at the door of the drawing-room. From this point of initial vantage our friend steered towards one anchor of dull recognition,

the tea table. Lingerin, he commenced to open the window from the drawing-room to the veranda. Encouraged and now very pleased with himself, he lifted the tea table with meticulous care and planted it rather harshly on the veranda outside the drawing-room window. This he then grandly closed. But still the idea of table, table, ever table, persisted in our friend's confused mind, and, swaying up to an occasional table removed all the little knick-knacks, and arranged them with loving and caressing care in a row along the sofa. This manoeuvre at last completed, our friend leered in the direction of his mistress, who, with her daughter and a guest, had watched this long drawn-out scene, amazed and fascinated. In fact, other servants had by now brought in the petrol lamps, which lighted the room. Our friend then betook himself off from the drawing-room, only shortly after to reappear with a tea-cosy, when he stood commandingly at the door and surveyed the room. Without any warning he then proceeded to hurl the tea-cosy straight across the full length of the room, landing a bull's-eye on a noble standard lamp, which, of course, swayed and rattled, spluttering its warning protests. But, in the face of threatened tragedy, security had unavoidably to be restored. So the wife of the Superintendent got up from her chair, took the drunken idiot by the arm, marched him down the whole length of the house, and told him he was to leave her service that moment, a direction which was both inevitable and extremely sad. But families, who are left alone for weeks on end, cannot afford to condone drunken male servants.

III

For a time the composition of poetry fell from favour, because under the new Christian influence, it savoured too much of the crude, bland, songs of old, songs of time, war, and women. But under the influence of the missions saner values are beginning once again to prevail, for a language with no poetry is no language at all. The "Young Lushai Association" at Aijal composed one set of verse to proclaim the ideals for which they stood.

"To establish the welfare of our Zoram (Lushai),
young maids and lads are united in the name of Y.L.A.
that ne'er our Forefathers bore we now take on
and always shall.

Y.L.A. the new name that now we bear is a name
which is fitting for us, young folks, our land
and our nation now feel secure thanks to our
beautiful name Y.L.A.

May all the people in all the villages
Be united and of one mind.
Let's learn and practise for the sake of our Land
All that's good in both new and the old.

Oh : Y.L.A. go on ever on.
Heed nought and scorn all difficulties,
give of your best in doing good,
strive now for all generations to come."

It sounds better in the Lushai language of its composition,
but the sentiments are genuine and sincere.

Another composition was presented on the occasion of
a Superintendent's visit, when he went to visit a village
called TUALTE, in view of the majestic hills of Burma,
and it was sung by the local Scout Patrol in the following
form :—

"You arrive Chief *Barsap at our village for the joy of all.
We are singing a song for you with partly swinging arms,
Let our hearts also bow down with happiness.

Faultless Judge, are you, our Barsap,
Long live, Chief Barsap, for ever,
And we wish your greatness be higher and higher.

We are gallant youngmen who are never afraid of the Germans.
Judging everything under the mighty sword of God,
Who can thereby most surely conquer all Nations.

Since the beginning of the world no nations have defeated us.
Therefore the nation who become the enemy of the British
three times
Is surely to lose its whole nation with no gain."

* Lushai term for BARA SAHIB or High Officer.

It is one form of modern composition which discloses the hillman's independence of outlook, so common among his prototype, far and wide. Here is another. It is strongly coloured by an emotionalism, inspired by Christian teachings and writings.

1. I dare not put away my armour,
For the peace of my abode is not safe,
A tempter fights daily to seduce me,
That I may forsake my blessed Redeemer.

Chorus :

O Emmanuel ! arm me !
Arm me with your spirit,
That I may stand against the darkness
And the wickedness of this world.

2. Even when I am weary and listless,
And when in despair for your presence,
For ever of that Crown keep reminding me,
The Crown you have kept for the Fighter.
3. Look all around about those,
Whom with your blood you redeemed,
They are so entangled amidst
The dark and wickedness of the world.
4. I shall see my Saviour as darkness passes,
Then my armour I will completely lay aside,
For the Saviour in his mercy will permit me
The glorious white shining robes to wear.

One way of getting to know any people is by doing business with them. The little turns of wit, petty meanesses, sometimes the sporting instinct, and often the understanding friendliness, all combine to make the experiment worth the suffering.

One old lady, with hard, thorny hands, burned with years of toil, with indomitable spirit, pressed upon Mrs. Joint Organiser, at Reid House, to give her fine work to do in preference to the rougher work, which beginners were accustomed to do. Mrs. Joint Organiser was fairly sure that the poor old lady was putting her ambition beyond her capacity, and to gain time turned the conversation towards the old lady's own cotton resources, and the conversation took the following form.

MRS. JOINT ORGANISER : How much cotton then have you actually got in your home with which you wish to take up this finer work ?

OLD LADY : I have my cotton crop.

MRS. JOINT ORGANISER : Of course. But is this large and have you plenty ?

OLD LADY : Oh ! I had two plants of cotton in my field, but when I went to pluck my cotton I put it in the pocket of my Jhum coat and, as a matter of fact, on the way back it fell out on the road and I lost it.

MRS. JOINT ORGANISER : But is that the only cotton you had in any case ?

OLD LADY : Yes. It was my Cotton Crop this year !

Needless to say, the old lady had to be content with processing cotton supplied by Mrs. Joint Organiser on labour charge, for which she was wholly grateful. There is, however, much behind such sallies ; more than one is at first inclined to realise.

One old lady, who was quite incapable of doing any work but the actual process of cleaning and spinning cotton, took away a certain amount of cotton, the bulk of which she carefully noted. On returning the cotton all properly processed and spun by hand, she produced a bundle of leaves and waste, and when asked why, she explained she wished to have this weighed up to make quite sure she had returned the exact amount of raw material, which she had been given. This waste was the total of all the cotton leaves and seeds, which the raw cotton had included when it was given to her ! !

Working with cotton is by no means an easy affair, and sometimes domestic bliss is disturbed, where there is no community of interests. A Lushai photographer found that his wife's industry in rug-making was presenting him with a serious threat to his business, because fluff kept drifting on to his plates or solutions ! The wife, thereupon, very wisely took her work out of doors, hoping to improve the domestic situation. But, as bad luck would have it, bitter remonstrances emanated from a little watch repairer, whose fine work was being seriously hampered by the new threat of drifting fluff. Not to be diverted from her worthy

purpose the last that was heard of this courageous lady was that she had established herself in her cookhouse. Her friends are apprehensive that they will one day hear that this new move has ended in failure by the family having absorbed an overshare of cotton in their food !!

The vagaries of the Lushai's English language are constant causes of diversion ! Reid House deals in money bags of cotton net which are supplied to Banks and Government Treasuries. In the case of one village the makers had not mastered the best technique for achieving a continuous unknotted net especially at the closed end of the money bags and this point had been emphasized for improvement. This was followed by one bright lad who blew into Reid House announcing to Mrs. Joint Organiser that he had come to "investigate the weakness of the bottoms of your bags ! !."

Some rugs were hanging up in Reid House after dyeing and the joint organiser *en passant* happened to ask why they had not been taken outside for drying in the air. The answer given was "I did not expose because I had not soaped" (soaped) !! It is all right of course when one realises the reference is to rugs and that soaping is part of the chemical processing of dyeing !

It is never possible to dodge the bore of any busy person's existence, the man who talks and talks but whose intentions are vague and uncertain. One Chief had made a great song of the great things that he would do to interest his villagers in working up a profitable association with Reid House. The first symptoms of fecklessness appeared when he wrote to say he had, after all, no cotton. When offered cotton by Reid House he wrote to say that he had no one who could dye the cotton even if he accepted it. Then, later, when it was found that, in fact, he had plenty of cotton, and all quite ready for use on lines that he had been appropriately offered, he said he could not take up the work because "Monkeys were *very* busy, with the wild pig, coming to eat up all our crops".

On the hypothesis that the proof of the pudding is in its eating, one is apt to form opinions of an educational system by its products. Reid House needed a clerk for the office

work. One applicant, imbued by the majesty of having passed the middle standard, was stumped by the following :

If the purchase price of a standard rug of 6 feet by 3 feet is twenty-five shillings what is the price of a rug sized $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet by $3\frac{1}{4}$ feet ?

To relieve the agony of failure, after a long interval, the applicant was invited to ascertain as a preliminary the price of one square foot. This had to be followed up by the head clerk of the Superintendent's office spending $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours in trying to implant the first principles of the practical application of anything that the clerk had been able to memorise at school. The problem set referred only to local currency, rupees, but sterling is given above, for simplicity's sake.

In one case, the joint organisers met with real trouble. There were three items in the cash book to add up by simple addition. Could the clerk secure a satisfactory result ? No ! On check, the figures for the total were found wrong, and the joint organisers took the clerk to task. But he replied : " Well ! I am very sorry ! But you see it is now many years since I gave up my mathematics ! ! "

On one occasion Mrs. Joint Organiser began to feel she really was beginning to get the jitters. A Lushai basket lay against the inside walls of Reid House, laden with raw cotton, which had just been supplied to the owner for processing. As Mrs. Joint Organiser went from the stock room to the cash office, and from the dye room to the public, she observed from time to time, from the corner of her eye, what she thought seemed to be a rising and a falling of the cotton in the basket ! At last she could stand this no longer, and, on investigation, it was found that the cotton had been placed over live crabs, which were moving up and down, and it was these which were causing all the movement !

The standard of natural honesty among the Lushais is very high, though they are rather easily worked up into a suspicious mind that someone is doing them down. One day a woman, who had brought in some fine rugs, had to be paid in a large sum, and the joint organisers used

a ten rupee note, worth about fifteen shillings, as part of the payment due to her. But the woman hung about, and, after a little, asked for the balance of money due to her. So the joint organisers asked her how much she had already received. She replied she had received all but ten rupees. When the joint organisers called her and took out of her mouth a ten rupee note she was flabbergasted to realise that such a small slip of paper represented so much. In 1938 this intelligent and sensible woman had no idea of the shape or design of paper money!! Yes! There are lots of fun and friendship in hospitable, majestic, Lushai. It cannot but be with regret, deep down in our hearts, that anyone finally embarks on the precarious journey on his farewell trip down the river to leave for ever Lushai, land of song, smiles, and surprises.

CHAPTER XI

FAREWELL LUSHAI

THE road down to the Dhaleswari, or TLAWNG river, is a stretch of thirteen miles, downhill all the way, without any reverse grades, a fall amounting to about three thousand three hundred feet. Looking out to the west, as we slog down the road, lie the distant ridges of Tripura State, after which a cave called the RENGPUK is named by Lushai legend. Many years ago the Rajah happened to be a nephew of the King of Burma, but relations were so strained that the Rajah was turned out of his State by the Burma King. On their flight the Rajah's party carried a cock with them, and, strangely enough, this cock never seemed to crow. But at a certain place the cock did crow with unmistakable determination, whereon the Rajah took this to be a sign that here at least was a place where they might find it safe to halt. Here fortifications were constructed, in the course of which a lake, about a hundred yards in length, was dug. This lake remains to this day, under the name of the Rengdil. During this time the Rajah hollowed out a cave, hidden under the lee of a steep bluff, in which he proposed to hide his children from the dangers of a possible attack by the men of the Burma King. The cave remains to this day.

We also have a last glimpse of the great RUPA KHAN, the northern stronghold of majestic CHAL FIL TLANG, standing rigid and serene, out to the eastern side of Aijal, like the hull of some great super-battleship. Rupa Khan, precipice near which no longer is heard the weakening peal of Liana's gong, as on the seventh day they ceased for ever with the death of that strange miser of ancient days. As though confident that he could carry his riches with him to another world, provided he could evade the sordid greed of his fellow men, assiduously he climbed this precipice, cutting down in his path each friendly, helping branch.

In this way, secure for ever from man's prying interference, he settled himself in the coveted cave alone with his worldly riches and his rich, deeply resounding, gong. But Liana, no longer a young man at the time of his venture, could only for a few days mock his world and those whom he knew coveted his possessions. After the seventh day no sound was heard, nor has ever sound since been heard. Since then none has been able to solve the riddle of Liana's wealth, and none has yet been able to climb the bare precipice up to Liana's last resting place, where, legend has it, that his treasure lies guarded by his impotent bones.

The road from Aijal ends at a place called Sairang, where the traveller has to enter a country boat, which is to be his home for two or three days. The boats are cramped, and it is not possible to stand up inside them, as the curved bamboo matted roof is too low. Mohammedan boatmen punt and guide the boats by long poles. Travellers must eat and sleep in their boats, or on the banks, till they reach the railhead at LALAGHAT, on the Assam Bengal Railway.

The time of the journey varies with the time of year, according as to whether the waters are in spate or running very low. High banks usually conceal the view beyond, and we float down through hill-sides of thick trees and bamboo jungle, dotted here and there with an occasional village. In the upper reaches rapids provide breaks in the monotony, and, sometimes, cause for some anxiety. There is the huge sinister gorge called the Asmani Dhar, only a few miles down the river from Sairang, and scene of many losses and much tribulation. It was at these very rapids that a Superintendent and his family met with disaster.

The party was returning from Shillong, where they had gone on account of a visit by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India. Baggage was on a larger scale than usual, and contained, unavoidably, much in the way of glad rags. The party consisted of the Superintendent, his wife, and grown-up daughter. Three boats were requisitioned, where two might well have sufficed. On the way up the river from Lalaghat one boat had to be abandoned, because it was holding back the other two,

the boatmen being sickly and suffering, unusually, with blistered hands. The luggage and staff were redistributed into the two remaining boats. Good progress was then made, all rapids being satisfactorily negotiated. But rain had been falling, and the river and torrent were on the increase. At the Asmani Dhar gorge the first boat negotiated much of the rapid, but at the last part failed and partially sank. There were five or six men pulling up stream from a narrow towpath with a sixty foot rope, while one man remained at the prow, on the boat, another at the stern with the rudder. The former's job was to hold the boat out in the stream by pressing his pole against the rock side of the high gorge. But suddenly he slipped and fell, thereon the boat nestled into the rock side, its prow raised and stern depressed by the action of the rope, which was being tugged at by the men upstream. Water commenced to rush in to the stern of the boat, washing out bedding, cushions, and what not. At last the men on the rope were persuaded to let go before the boat wholly sunk in a savage rush of water, in which no human could have lived. At the moment of release, one of the men took a flying leap from a high rock on to the roof of the oscillating boat, and by a feat of great dexterity, courage, and coolness, managed to prevent the boat from turning turtle, as it was precipitated headlong down the river, before being thrown up on to the river bank like so much drift.

Chaos reigned, and cries of Allah ! Allah ! pierced the tense atmosphere of howling, angry, waters. The Superintendent's daughter, perched on a slippery ledge, thirty feet above the scene, kept her head, and got some photographs of the scene. His wife, with providential presence of mind, slapped the Lushai Ayah's face, as, in screaming hysteria, she was about to throw herself down into the watery abyss below, where only death could have resulted.

Only one boat now remained. Most of the men were suffering from shock. Irreparable damage had been done to valuable possessions, and much food had been destroyed, and nearly all the kit soaked. It was three-fifteen in the

afternoon, with jungles all around, and the party still far from shelter. A decision had to be made. There was nothing for it but to attempt to reach shelter.

Grabbing a tin of ginger nuts that had miraculously escaped, some whisky, beer, and a few oddments, which could be carried, the party set off into the jungle about four o'clock in the afternoon in blue sky and with hearts undaunted. History has it that the collection of these few oddments presented great difficulties. The cook, though an elderly, experienced, and long-tried campaigner, first produced a tin of LACTOL¹ as his idea for the party's nourishment!! Had there been nothing else, this canine preparation might have served well, but it was certainly no usual item of diet. But this showed the state of mind people were in.

On and on the party laboured, tracking here, climbing there, slipping down steep ravines, and clambering over fallen tree trunks. After half an hour, torrential rain began to fall, which continued till seven thirty! The party was soaked to the skin, harassed by leeches, which climbed everywhere and anywhere, much to the confusion of the plucky ladies of the party, and on they went until the track they had been following came to an abrupt end, and they found themselves surrounded by tall, uncut, jungle. People were all becoming exhausted, and a kind of claustrophobic nausea had descended on some of the party, from the oppressive influence of struggling along under heavy jungles almost hiding the skies. It was decided to make a last dash back to the river side and to the open. Some of the boatmen here gave up, declining to move another step. One little Lushai, Pu Taia by name, agreed with alacrity and determination to cut the way down towards the river. At length this was reached, just as light was failing. Full of renewed hope, the wife of the Superintendent, who was leading the party, fell into soft mud nearly up to her waist, silt deposited by the subsiding of a river in flood. It was clear to all that a conference was advisable and a rest!! To have gone on would have brought exhaustion and defeat.

¹ A tonic food for dogs.

With the help of a petromax lamp, plans were discussed and food sought. Pu Taia agreed to take an electric torch—now nearly exhausted by the damp—and to plod upstream in search of men or boats. The cook, about to expire, was given the whisky, which he finished, and soon volunteered courageously that, in his opinion, all this was fun, and that light would prevail over darkness!! The party shared the one bottle of beer, one-third each. The tin of ginger nuts was gallantly handed to the now calmer little Lushai Ayah, but on opening this there was nothing but a liquid brownny mess!! Cigarettes were handed round to all, and set alight by the heartening and robust petromax lantern.

PU TAIA, in the meantime, was successful in his mission, and soon some Lushais, who had been out fishing by night, appeared in a boat. This proved to be the turn of the tide. The tragedy became known.

The party was transferred across the raging and torrential river in this shallow-bottomed boat, all having sworn to keep their seats on the bottom of the boat till it actually sank. Fortunately, the crossing of all was safely effected. The party took refuge in the house of a Lushai gardener, Pu Vanchhunga, and sitting around a crackling fire, wet to the skins, ate luscious pineapple, cut into slices with a large hunting knife, and there waited till the kit and servants arrived. By midnight Sairang bungalow was reached, and it was as though some civic celebrations were afoot. All the bazaar turned out, lights, offers of hospitality, material, mosquito nets, rice, and anything which it was within the power of these good people to give was offered to this bedraggled party in its sad distress. Fortunately, in spite of everything, no serious illness developed, and the only damage was material, yet this was on an extensive scale. But this is an account of only one of the victories to the score of this sinister gorge, the Asmani Dhar. Four years later this same Superintendent and his wife met a similar fate, but on this latter occasion were nearer death, and the story may be left for another time.

So on down the river we go till we arrive at the little country railway station of Lalaghat, where we wait patiently

with no suitable comforts, shelter or amenities, until the connection for the Calcutta mail starts to snort out its importance.

On looking back towards the south we see hills, which now seem very distant. It is difficult to realise that in their midst, where no telephones, motor cars, electricity, even proper water supplies exist, there is a life of pulsating vitality, hopes that are cherished, and that can end in despair, love tragedies, human suffering, vanities and intrigue.

We recall the laughter, the humour, the simple gestures of a friendly people, the absence of unpleasantness, the willingness to be friends, a country with little, yet abounding with generosity.

So it is farewell to the land of the THINGSULHTLIA, or the bundle of leaves and twigs, which ever increases as each passer-by throws on more and more branches and leaves to mark the place where lovers were found in abandoned embrace. To avoid in old age any possible pains from earlier indiscretions, and also perhaps as a warning to all lovers to be more discreet in their choice of woodland arbour, each passer-by is bound to add his quota to the modest stack which originally marked the discovery. Only the abandoning of the use of this particular pathway through some forest glade can limit the zenith of this tell-tale witness.

What a confusion in our minds ! The people who love the good in an offer, but often chose in action to exploit it in less intended ways. A people basically addicted to seeking short cuts to achieve their ends. Some would say a lazy people, but why should a people, so anxious to improve their status and condition, submit so easily to the bugbear of laziness, when, in fact, they have to live such hard, testing lives ? Perhaps it is the lack of balanced diets, full in preventive foods. Without freedom from disease there is no mood in man to plant the foods or husband the cattle. Without the food there can be no constitutional strength. Where now there is health, it is attacked by worms or other debility diseases, easily acquired from the insanitary conditions arising from living among animals,

and indiscriminate defecating. These fundamental defects can only be remedied by increased and wise industry, which in towns relies on the motive power derived from health and energy. Medicine is taken prolifically, but is a mere cover, a palliative, while conditions remain chronic, through lack of energy to fight them. Then the enemy reaches the stature of a vicious circle, once again reminiscent of the energetic story of CHEMTATRAWTA in Chapter III. If only first we could give the people health, they would not be slow to respond to innovations calculated to secure the continuity of good constitutional health. With health, the people could well face the future years. The main test of the administration should be to secure the people's health, after which ordinary activities and better agricultural methods will materialise, naturally, far beyond the realms of talks and lectures and demonstrations, to a body weary and a body taxed people. Even now the conditions, which prevail in many Lushai villages, should, in themselves, suffice to afford encouragement, even to the critical, for more and more patient service. The condition of the Lushai people to-day would, however, stagger those, who first came into contact with them half a century ago.

But Lushai has gigantic problems ahead, such as changes in traditional methods of agriculture to conserve the soil, the countering of soil erosion ; even her own political future may soon be at stake. Certain principles of administrative approach have been enunciated in this book. If the machinery can be grafted into the lives of the people, so that they can come to look upon it as their own, come to see that it is of vital use to them in the arrangement of their lives, then it is sure that these other great problems will be the more easily tackled.

Can we not, then, certainly say farewell to Lushai with far greater faith than that with which the Lushais viewed the British Government after their first experiences of submission ? The sentiments of the Lushais of those early days can best be indicated in the words of PU DARA, interpreter, Colonel Shakespear's ever faithful help and friend :—

" . . . The Lushais thought that the British Government would leave Lushai as soon as they have subdued the country and many Lushais did not expect to see them eat the fruits of the banana trees they had planted.

" However, up to the present the British Government has remained and we live in peace and prosperity under this protection."

Mr. Winston Churchill :

" We have been deeply conscious of the love for us which has flowed from the Dominions of the Crown across the broad ocean spaces.

" This is the first of our war aims to be worthy of that Love and to preserve it."

—END—

APPENDIX A.

This address was given in Lushai on April 2nd, 1942. The answer was given by the Chiefs on April 3rd—see Chapter XI, page 304.

Chiefs of the North Lushai Hills :

I have asked you all here to-day to discuss with you whether you are prepared to gird yourselves and your peoples for the purpose of organising the defence of our Land, our Homes, our Women, and our Children.

The Japanese have not stopped at invading Burma. Are we going to stand by if they ever attempt to invade our fair land?

We have done no wrong to the Japanese. They are engaged on a war of plunder in the guise of a campaign of Asia for the Asiatics, which all the world has now for long seen means Asia for the Japanese. This means Japanese for Lushai posts.

We here in Lushai are not forced to work without pay. We here in Lushai are not slaves. We seek no one's lands. We seek no one's women, no one's property. But the Japanese outrage women.

We are free people. What is ours has always been left to us by His Majesty. His Majesty has never permitted us to be looted, to be tortured, to be outraged. On the contrary His Majesty has conferred peace and benefits upon us regardless of our position, be we rich or poor, and has afforded us all absolutely impartial justice in our disputes or our behaviour.

I, therefore, ask you to decide after discussion among yourselves whether you will give your allegiance to His Majesty to the effect that you agree to take up arms and to fight on until the enemy is subdued, no matter what may come. I ask you to give me your answer to-morrow.

But before you give your answer you must realise and ponder the tasks which will fall to you. Let me tell you what these will be.

Every gun in your village must be placed in the hands of the bravest and the strongest of your villagers; although I will always do my best to secure for you any additional guns which it may be possible to obtain, you must on no account count on any more than we have in the district becoming available, as there are many enemies in many places and we have to do the best we can everywhere.

If a gun owner is unable to take up arms actively to fight the enemy, he should agree to make over his gun to a young man chosen by the Chief and his Upas. If the gun owner does this I will ensure that his licence is kept alive and that when our danger has passed the gun owner will get back his gun. If he is not inclined thus to lend his gun, it will be seized and disposed of to



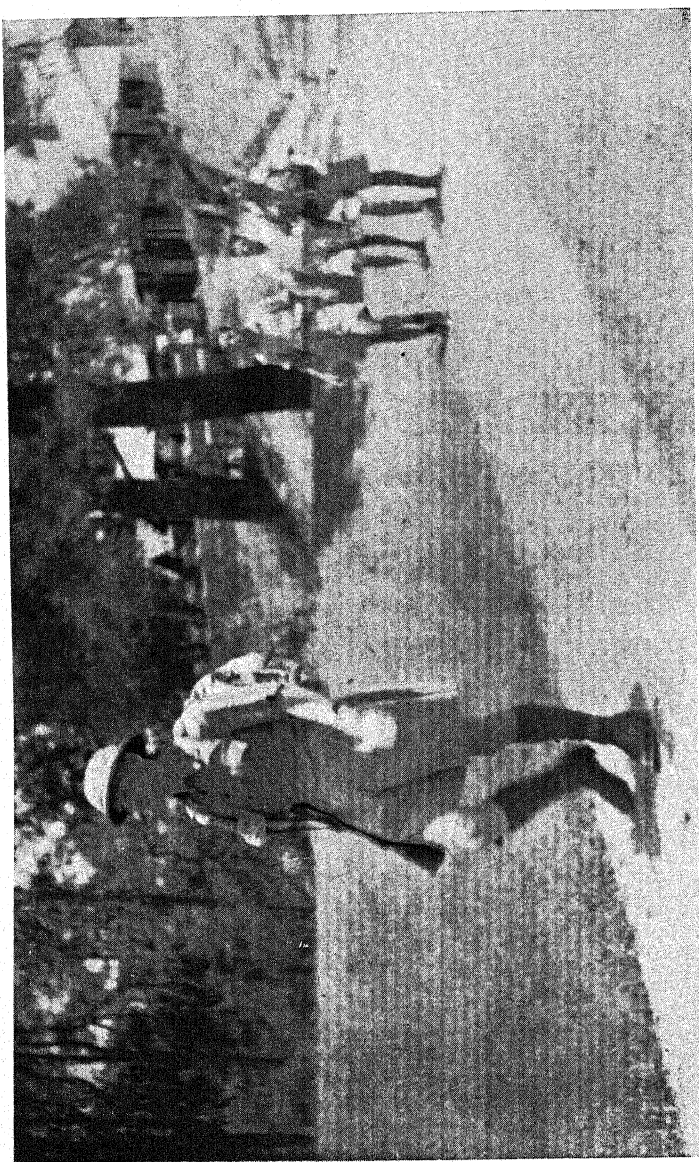
MEN WHO HELPED TO RAISE THE ASSAM REGIMENT IN 1941

Left to right : Mr. R. C. R. Cumming, C.I.E., I.P., Inspector General of Police Assam ; Brigadier Ross Howman, O.B.E. ; *Lt.-Col. "Bruno" Brown, D.S.O., O.B.E.

*The Author with the skilful assistance of Colonel W. D. Joyce, the Punjaubis, and Major C. G. Cuerdon, 7th Gurkha Rifles, raised many Lushai recruits for this Regiment which sustained its first real baptism of fire when it delayed the Japanese invasion attack on India, delaying much superior forces of the Japanese and thus enabling the defenders of Kohima to accelerate plans for its defence, making possible the gallant and epic feat known as the Siege of Kohima in which *Mr. Charles Pawsey, C.I.E., M.C., I.C.S., the Deputy Commissioner, remained making a most outstanding contribution to the successful outcome of a vital stand.*

*Since killed in action during counter offensive against Burma.

* Since created Companion of the Star of India and Knighted.



MR. IAN BOWMAN, INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE

of the United Provinces who answered a call from Assam for much needed assistance on the Eastern Frontier of Assam. At the request of Major General Rich, C.B., and Colonel R. A. Critchley, M.C., his services were made over to the Total Defence Scheme. He is seen above leaving Aijal as soldier civilian carrying only a 12-bore gun and kukri to proceed to the South Lushai Hills where he and Lt. John Harvey 1st Bn. Assam Rifles with but a handful of men took up defensive positions in the first week in May, 1942, to meet the potential invaders from the Aracan Hill Tracts of which the Headquarters were at Paletwa.

a willing fighter, but if this has to be done the gun owner will of course lose his licence, though he will receive payment for his gun.

These gunmen will be whole time men and will often be used within the Circle to which the village belongs, but they will also be called from their Circles to go forward to help anywhere in the defence of the Lushai Hills, at all times when their own particular Circle happens to be out of immediate danger.

Should, however, the enemy manage to penetrate into the Lushai Hills from any side and should he manage to pass through a Circle the gunmen OF THAT CIRCLE as well as others will be in duty bound ordered to, and expected to, even without orders, REMAIN in their own Circle group. Other gunmen from different Circles will fall back with the enemy or before him in order to continue delaying his advance and to continue causing him every delay, every difficulty, and every loss. Those gunmen left behind in Circles through which the enemy will pass must IN HONOUR BOUND continue to harass the enemy and to cause him difficulty and loss by every device within the ingenuity of the Chiefs and the people to conceive.

I wish to discourage any attempts by our gunmen at direct frontal attacks against an enemy who may possess more up to date arms than we ourselves possess. Such attacks might be too costly in casualties. No ! I ask you to attack the enemy by means of ambushes—stalking—assaults and RAPID withdrawals back into the jungle which he will not know—for you later again to return again to attack him. Let scouts follow his movements secretly and quietly—find out his night or resting camp—and then to rally 15 to 20 gunmen to fall upon the enemy when he least expects it, and in this way to interfere with his feeding—his resting—and his sense of well-being.

We should all remember that the further the enemy penetrates into our Land the more easy it will be to inflict damage to him and to annihilate him completely, which must ALWAYS be our aim. We know our lands—our paths—our water. He does not. Harass him continually and he will fall at your mercy when he becomes exhausted.

In our support we shall have our splendid Battalion in the ranks of which you all have friends and good men. These men are first class soldiers and it will fall to them to engage the enemy in direct attack when this promises to give success or when it is essentially necessary. Your gunmen will always be operating and will be seeking out the small parties of the enemy whom they could effectively attack.

While the gunmen would always be out in groups harassing the enemy within their own Circles your villagers will have much to do and these duties will include the following :—

- (1) Cultivating more carefully than usual, and if possible more extensively.
- (2) Hiding and storing all food-stuffs in secret jungle places.

- (3) Evacuating village sites entirely and taking refuge in the jungles to save your women and children from the hands of a cruel enemy, and in order to prevent him from obtaining any food or supplies—so that he may find himself in a foreign country with no food.
In this way will we the better be able to overcome him.
- (4) Laying traps in the lines of advance of the enemy.
- (5) Fortifying any difficult position which might hold up an enemy.
- (6) Undercutting main paths to cause the enemy delay and loss at high and steep places.
- (7) Putting bamboo panjis in the ground to wound the enemy—the points, perhaps, being hardened by fire.
- (8) Destruction of bridges across rivers.
- (9) To give food and hospitality as our own brothers and men without payment to any Indian Officers or other ranks of the Assam Rifles when arriving in small parties engaged with us in active operations against the enemy or on their way to engage the enemy—the same in the case of all our PASALTHAS (Lushai name for guerillas).
- (10) Making bows and arrows which can be shot silently and which will weary and harass the enemy.
- (11) Organising the people in case of any enemy airplanes coming our way.
- (12) In fact everything which the ingenuity of yourselves and your people can devise to enable us to preserve the independence of our country.

The Chiefs of each land will be responsible for executive leadership within our lands entirely and will have to work on their own and respond to any orders it may be necessary for me to give.

So, good people! there is your task. You have been outstanding in your support of every effort that has so far been possible for us to make in support of His Majesty. I am now asking you to look deep into your hearts and to decide among yourselves if you are, with all your peoples, in that mind to take up arms against the enemy, and having taken them up, NOT to lay them down till we have managed to subdue him, either in our own land or in some more distant land where it may fall to others in our cause to bring him to his knees.

Do not forget your womenfolk! Can you rely upon them bravely to face the possible death of their sons, their husbands? This is the price of war. This is the price we all have to pay for saving our women from ruthless outrage, our children from cruelty, ourselves from working without pay for a foreign invader.

I do not ask your answer now. I ask for your answer to-morrow after you have looked at all sides.

I will ask you by show of hands in token of our allegiance to His Majesty to make known your decision to-morrow.

I am, however, absolutely confident of your decision.

I ask you to realise that here is an offer, an invitation, to prove that Lushai is as valiant in war as in peace, and that in asking you to join in our total defence scheme, you and your people are being treated as men, as friends, trusted friends of His Majesty, our King and our Emperor.

A. G. McCALL,
MAJOR, I.C.S.,
Superintendent, Lushai Hills.

Note.—Within four months the Chiefs addressed had secured the written agreement of over 90 per cent. of their householders to support the Total Defence Scheme. In these signatures lay the safeguard that no one, however humble, could be dragged into a civil resistance movement without understanding.

APPENDIX B.

Below is a general manifesto issued to the people of Lushai on May 6th, 1942, by which time the decision of the Chiefs of Lushai to resist any Japanese or other invasion had begun to take practical shape.

The manifesto had several objects : --

1. To stimulate discussion among the people so that they could come to some clear decision in their own minds which would result in unstinted support to the Chiefs' decisions.
2. To serve as propaganda to counter the defeatist preaching, which was not by any means absent from the attitude of some Congress supporters in the India to the rear of the Lushai Hills, to the effect that invasion by the Japanese would make no difference to the people, the process only involving "a change of masters."
3. Propaganda against the view based on the showing of Malaya, Java and Burma that the Civil Government would leave the people to their fate if the enemy came. (On May 10th they were in Paletwa and threatening to advance northwards into the South Lushai Hills.)
4. To consolidate the efforts made since 1936 to inculcate into the Chiefs and people the need for National unity in all matters affecting the welfare of the people of Lushai as a whole.
5. To stress the part that each individual must discipline himself or herself to play, in the face of what appeared to be the coming ordeal.

Note.—The Japanese excluded Lushai from their invasion plans as executed in March–April, 1944. The response by Lushai to all calls proved prodigious.

The following prominent non-Lushai officials and non-officials remained within the Lushai Hills even through the period of invasion of 1944 :—

AIJAL.

Major and Mrs. A. G. McCall till June, 1943.

Mr and Mrs. A. R. H. Macdonald from June, 1943, onwards, when Mr. Macdonald, I.C.S., was the Superintendent, Lushai Hills.

Mr. and Mrs. B. M. Roy, Assistant Superintendent.

Mr. R. C. Das, Assistant Engineer and his P.W.D. Staff.

Dr. S. C. Deb, M.B., Civil Surgeon.

Rev. Mr and Mrs. E. Lewis, Mendus till February, 1944, when they retired after twenty-three years in the Lushai Hills.

Miss K. Hughes (Kaisar-i-Hind Medal).

Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Davies.

Dr. Parul Roberts, M.B., Ch.B.

Miss Gwladys Evans.

Rev. Basil Jones.

LUNGLEH

Mr. Edgar Hyde, I.C.S., Additional Superintendent, Lushai Hills, volunteering his services from the Central Provinces Cadre.

Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Peters, Sub-Divisional Officer.

Rev. H. W. Carter, B.Sc.

Miss E. Chapman (Kaisar-i-Hind Medal).

Miss E. Oliver (Kaisar-i-Hind Medal).

Miss Goode.

Miss Clarke.

SHERKHOR.

Rev. Mr. and Mrs. R. Lorrain.

Mr. and Mrs. Lorrain-Foxall.

Mr. Ian Bowman, I.C.S., fought in Battle with "V" Force.

May 6th, 1942.

MANIFESTO TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE LUSHAI HILLS
CONCERNING THE DECISION OF THE CHIEFS OF THE LUSHI
HILLS TO OFFER TOTAL RESISTANCE TO ANY INVADER.

The decision of the Lushai Chiefs of the North on April 4th, and those of the South on April 16th, to offer total resistance to any invader places the Lushai Hills on the same basis of Total Defence as the peoples of England, Scotland and Wales. We are all from now on men and women, bound indissolubly together to respond to any call that may be made upon us.

Life for us from now on is no longer individual ; it is communal. The failure of one village or another may bring death to many others.

We must not fail.

The road will be hard—not spectacular. We may lose life, limbs, or our loved ones. The enemy may not even come to the Lushai Hills, but we must assume he will and be prepared so we shall be strong.

It may be of interest to consider how this trial has been placed upon us.

The Chiefs of the Lushai Hills had two courses open to them :—

1. Not to oppose any invader, condoning his incursion, and falling to his promises, so broken elsewhere.
2. To oppose any invader.

How could the Chiefs follow course 1? The enemy come with no good intention. They have no peace to bring who have murdered the people of China for nearly five years. Any who have fallen to their promises are now paying the price and for the hope of physical security have now to behave as slaves, pay high taxes, and to suffer to make great the War Lords of Japan.

The Chiefs and people of Lushai could only follow course 2. But if we are to face toil and tribulation it behoves us well to ponder. It behoves us to weigh the results that hang upon our sacrifices.

You will remember that in 1935 the British peoples enacted an Act which had for its purpose the inauguration of Dominion Status for India. The British peoples could have included the destiny of Lushai straight away with that of the Indian peoples. But they did not. They made Lushai what is now known as an "Excluded Area" and they retained the right to protect Lushai from subjection to any other majority control.

Was that not an Act which gave proof that the British people's wish was to protect Lushai Land, and to ensure that the destiny of Lushai passes to no other hands *without the consent of the Lushai peoples?*

Forty-five years of close contact between the Lushai and the British people have served to disclose that there is no basic incompatibility between the British and the Lushai day to day outlook on life. The same harmony cannot be claimed in relation to any close contacts elsewhere.

If Lushai Land were handed over to India or Burma what chance would we, who are Lushais, have of entering into the social and cultural framework of either power at this late stage, bearing in mind the fact that geographically or culturally we never have been a part of either.

So Lushai's destiny has really hung in the balance ever since 1935 when it became apparent that the desire of the British Government was to place the destiny of India in the hands of her own people.

If we can understand that, then how could the Chiefs and the peoples of the Lushai Hills on reflection choose any other course but to resist the invader? To remain passive at a time of trial for the peace-loving peoples of Britain, America, China, Russia, and all the Democracies would surely result in these great Nations ceasing, after the war, to evince any further interest in the peoples and the Land of Lushai, linking them up for ever elsewhere.

No! the Chiefs have made a wise decision. Let all of us be careful to see that we are worthy of the wisdom displayed by the Chiefs. Besides, the Lushai people have always been very loyal

to His Majesty and it is natural that they should choose to stand by the Government in any hour of trial.

We must see, then, clearly that our sacrifices are to be made in order that without our agreement, we may press never to be abandoned by the people of Britain and never to be cast unwanted, undesired, into the control of any but the peoples of Britain and the other powerful Democratic Powers.

In this way for all these reasons we must from now on place our lives and properties in the keeping of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in India, General Sir Archibald Wavell, and respond to all calls which may be made upon us to defend our Land, and in so doing earn if necessary through toil, tribulation, perhaps death, the right to press on Britain to preserve our freedom and way of life under the protection of, and with the friendship and goodwill of, the peoples of the British Empire and other Democratic powers.

The penalty for any failure on our side may be cruelty and death at the hands of the enemy.

Some may feel we are not strong enough to resist. If we are too weak-hearted to resist we must not expect to stand favourably in the eyes of the United Nations.

But we are strong. Let me give you some good reasons, apart from the fact that our General will do all he can to see we get what fighting help is possible.

In 1936 following upon the 1935 Government of India Act, Lushai's fate was clearly in the balance.

If we were to be deserving of the consideration of the great British peoples who have been Lushai's firmest friends for long we had to show we were a virile people, united, and keen to raise ourselves, to rise to national and united status.

The Superintendent, Lushai Hills, created certain avenues by which the Lushai peoples could prove themselves worthy. The Village Welfare Committee System was a great encouragement to a much needed unity. It brought Christians and non-Christians nearer, lessened the gap between Chiefs and people, the Chiefs and the Church, the men and the women. The 10-point code created a means for unity in our senses of what was expected of any good Lushai citizen. The Lushai Hills Cottage Industries created the means by which the skill of Lushai might spread far and wide and by which Lushai might unite together in pride and satisfaction for the gifts of skill handed down from our forefathers. Lushais themselves write from Cairo and from Quetta and from elsewhere, proud to see Lushai products being used by the Army institutions and others, while even now Lushai articles have been specially sent by the Government of India to Johannesburg, the city of Gold, in Africa, as an example of our ancient and contemporary art.

Then in 1938, you, who keep in touch with world affairs, will remember the Munich agreement of 1938, by which Mr. Chamberlain managed to put off war with Germany for one more

precious year. The Superintendent, Lushai Hills, then intensified the above avenues to create our national strength and unity and intensified Circle Conferences among Chiefs, culminating in October, 1941, in a full District Durbar of Circle Representative Chiefs from the North and the South Lushai Hills. Such a body is the initial personification of Lushai national life. It would be difficult to aspire to nationhood without such institutions as the above.

Thus from disunity we have progressed to unity. From suspicion and fear and petty disputes and rivalries we have come nearer and more unified in outlook, more alive to the importance of ourselves being worthy to beseech Britain never to abandon us to any other power except with our consent. This happy attainment has been due very greatly to our friends the Missionaries in our midst who have spent much and their energies that we shall prosper and rise.

So if we must suffer because a grabbing enemy is not far from our land we know we struggle for something worth while, viz., the security of our whole future.

I, therefore, appeal to you each one of you to respond and to realise that the weakness or cowardice or mischief of one of us may mean the death of many good Lushai peoples.

I appeal to the strong both men and women to help the aged, the weak, and the sick and to strive to save children from all possible suffering.

I appeal to each member of the Educational salaried cadre to exert his influence among the people to obey and to help their Chiefs and village elders in their responsible tasks.

I make a personal appeal to each important member of the Lushai Church, North and South, to afford similar support to the endeavour of our unhappy peoples in meeting this threat of unprovoked aggression.

Together we can most certainly stand.

Disunited we must not only fall, but we shall bring death and destruction on ourselves far in excess of that which we may have to meet as a brave and united nation.

It is the wish of the Government that those non-Lushais who are not essential as part of the administrative war machine should leave the Lushai Hills for this short period of distress, which we hope may not be longer than one year at the most.

It is for this reason that those non-Lushais who are not directly concerned with the administration will be leaving the Hills temporarily.

The enemy is not here. The enemy may never dare to come. What we will be doing from time to time will be done so that if he comes, we shall not be taken by surprise and be unprepared.

Let there be no panic. Panic is weakness, not a sign of bravery. It wastes energy, and hinders our security.

The Lushais are a manly and a martial race.

Let us never forget this truth.

NOTE.

In view of the decision of the Lushai Chiefs the General Officer Commanding Assam District has sanctioned the supply of additional improved type guns for use by selected Pasalthas, ammunition and a definite plan for defence of Lushai by Lushais in which the Assam Rifles operating under the Army Command will play the major part, and provide the main striking forces, our Pasalthas working in close co-operation.

It has also been possible for me to secure certain financial assistance in the case of those Chiefs and people who co-operate in accepting the needs of our local defence. Such assistance will of course be contingent on the Chief being able to secure total support from all his villagers.

Do not forget the Axis powers have attacked us because they dislike the way that we give education to any who are not white in colour or are not Japanese, and that they dislike the way we treat all our people with equal fairness. They want Malaya, India, Siam, Indo-China, Java and all such places so that they can turn their people into their slaves for the aggrandisement of Germany, Italy and Japan.

The penalty for loss of our own present independence will be a change to the Axis way of living. Let us think before we leap !

A. G. McCALL,
MAJOR, I.C.S.,

6th May, 1942.

Superintendent, Lushai Hills.

"In 1944 the Japanese, having previously occupied successfully the Chin Hills posts of Haka, Falom and Tiddim, launched their successful invasion of Assam. They were brought to a standstill by the long and bloody battle of Kohima after failing to invest Imphal, the capital of the Manipur State, see map facing page 304."

EPILOGUE

1890.

"We've chivvied the Naga and Looshai,
We have given the Afridiman Fits."

Rudyard Kipling.

LUSHAI, 1944.

Five per cent. of her male population serving with the Armed Forces, having sustained a civil resistance movement on a total scale, in addition to meeting prolific demands on Military, Defence, and Chin Hills account, for porters, services, and food, and yet feeding herself without call on any other for assistance, and all this in the very face of the Japanese enemy for upwards of three years, and not one quizzling. Greater service ?

